DOUBLE ISSUE

The Nation.

LIBRARIANS, GRANNIES AND OTHER PATRIOTS
The Editors

CHILLING THE PRESS
Scott Sherman

HARLAN COUNTY BLUES
Erik Reece

PETER BEINART'S FIGHTING FAITH
Andrew J. Bacevich

THE COMING BALLOT MELT-DOWN

OHIO COULD BE THE PLACE —AGAIN
by ANDREW GUMBEL

JULY 17/24, 2006
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MORE DIEBOLD VOTE FIXERS

Los Angeles

■ In "Fighting for a Fair Vote" [June 26], John Nichols approvingly cites the candidacy of Democratic State Senator Debra Bowen for California Secretary of State. Bowen has a laudable concern about hackable paperless electronic voting machines like the Diebold machines that were banned by Secretary of State Kevin Shelley—before the Republicans dug up some dirt on him, forced him out of office and replaced him with Bruce McPherson, a Republican who sneakily re-certified Diebold machines for California back in February. So Senator Bowen's quest to become Secretary of State could well depend upon questionable Diebold electronic voting machines. Lots of luck, Senator Bowen: You're going to need it. JON KRAMPNER

MR. PANTSONFIRE & THE MEDIA

Newport, Ore.

■ As a hard-news reporter who recently retired after almost forty years at *The Oregonian*, the biggest daily newspaper in the Northwest, I think Eric Alterman's observations about the nation's news media are right on target ["The Liberal Media," June 26]. The media's gutless reaction to George W. Bush's commitment to lying whenever possible about whatever possible has been driving me nuts. I can't figure out why the MSM individually and collectively have not hung Mr. Forked Tongue out to dry. I'm beginning to think he could molest 6-year-olds on the White House lawn and get plaudits for assertiveness from the media.

JOHN PAINTER JR.

VETS & CINDY—STANDING TOGETHER

Mountain View, Calif.

■ Thank you, Karen Houppert, for "Cindy Sheehan: Mother of a Movement?" [June 12], on one of my heroes. A photo of a grieving Sheehan is on my refrigerator next to snapshots of my beautiful sons and daughter-in-law, as a reminder of how this war affects us at the family level. CHRISTINA PETERSON

Kihei, Hi.

■ Karen Houppert's excellent article didn't mention that Cindy is the author of three books: *Not One More Mother's Child*, *Dear President Bush* and *Peace Mom* (coming in September). After long days traveling and speaking, she often stays up into the night writing on her laptop. Italian Nobel Laureate Dario Fo has said, "There is a rhythm and tempo in her prose which recalls the great epic writers of Greece. Cindy is a born writer." ARNIE KOTLER

Publisher, Koa Books

College Park, Md.

■ Karen Houppert cites my *Washington Post* article "On the Home Front: The Politics of Motherhood" to show that Cindy Sheehan has been criticized for "speaking beyond her place as a mother." Her analysis of the Sheehan controversy is correct, but she doesn't address the underlying central struggle between private and public.

Is "mother" a private identity whose proper place is the private sphere of family life? Is that why so many people find it troubling that a mother would publicly mourn her private loss? For parents who lose a child in the public service of their nation, the illusion of the "private" sphere—safe from government intrusion—is gone forever. In such cases the expectation that private opinions about issues like war should be kept out of the public (read: political) sphere is unrealistic. And we all know this. It's why the government has awarded Gold Stars to mothers who lost their sons in wars since WWI. It's why President Lyndon Johnson addressed his 1965 propaganda film, *Why Vietnam?*, to mothers who wanted to know why their sons were being drafted into a conflict halfway around the world. It's why authoritarian regimes from Ceausescu to Videla and Stalin have cast mothers as essential players in the narrative of the "new" nation.

Mothers are powerful, but not always in ways that traditional politics are comfortable with. They blur the line between the public and the private in ways that threaten the hegemony of the state. The more nuclear, isolated and patriarchal a family, the more likely its members will be to fall in line with the state. Sheehan's family is none of these, which is why she gets so much press. She asks us to acknowledge that the interests of the public, national "family" can be profoundly threatened by the bonds of the private, nuclear family. She claims that all issues in a democracy are really public, despite our efforts to hide from them in our private worlds. Without great imagination or tragic personal loss, these are realities that few of us are comfortable facing.

MEGHAN GIBBONS

Jersey City, NJ

■ Karen Houppert claims that Veterans for Peace organizers were worried that Cindy Sheehan's protest would draw members and media attention away from their convention and that "somewhat reluctantly" a busload of protesters was sent to Crawford.

Excuse me? When Cindy came to speak at our national convention, she had already announced her intention to camp out at Bush's vacation ranch. I urged our members to divide our forces so we could support this Gold Star Mom and also continue the convention business. I used the analogy of a military company, saying we should send a platoon on this special operation to open up a new front opposing Bush's war. Early next morning those going with Cindy boarded the Mendocino Chapter 116 White Rose Impeachment Tour bus, as well as numerous cars, and convoyed to Crawford.

Over the next month large numbers of Veterans for Peace members stayed in "the ditch," many for the duration. When we broke camp, we ran a three-vehicle Bring Them Home Now bus tour through many cities in the South, East and Midwest to help build for the big September 2005 march in Washington as well as sending a fourth bus to the Gulf Coast to conduct Hurricane Katrina relief efforts.

If Houppert asks any of the thousands of people involved in this campaign, she will find no one who says we "reluctantly" agreed to any of these actions. DAVID CLINE

National president, Veterans for Peace

Deer Park, NY

■ Karen Houppert gives a positive description of the massive impact this dedicated and heroic woman has had on today's peace movement. However, she continually refers to the "antiwar" movement. How quaint and retro '60s-ish! The movement Cindy Sheehan is a spokesperson for is much broader than merely "antiwar." From the coalition of organizations forming United for Peace and Justice to Veterans for Peace, who strongly supported and provided logistical support for Camp Casey last August, the movement articulates an enlightened progressive agenda for substantive, even revolutionary, change in American policy and politics. To characterize it merely as "antiwar" diminishes its goals and objectives. THOMAS BRINSON

Stockholm, NJ

■ I take exception to Karen Houppert's characterization of VFP's reluctance to accompany Cindy on her initial foray to Crawford. I and many others were extremely enthusiastic to make the trip. And our membership, along with the Iraq Veterans Against the War, has ceaselessly supported and accompanied Cindy on all her actions. BILLY KELLY

Middletown, Calif.

■ We are not and never have been just "antiwar protesters." We are veterans of America's wars who oppose war as a national policy. It is precisely our experience as veterans that brings us to an antiwar movement. Karen Houppert does us dishonor and indicates she has little feel

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EDITORIALS

American Patriots

Patriotism, Tom Paine observed, is not best measured in times of national comfort and quiet. It is in times of crisis, when the summer soldiers and sunshine patriots have retreated to the safety of official talking points and unquestioning loyalty, that those who truly understand the meaning and merit of the American experiment come to its defense. On the 230th anniversary of the launch of that experiment, let us reflect on those who have met the test, noting in particular that some of the boldest expressions of patriotism have come from groups not necessarily associated with dissent.

Consider America's librarians. Since the enactment of the Patriot Act in 2001, the American Library Association (ALA) has been at the forefront of the fight to defend freedom of inquiry and thought from provisions of the act that allow the Justice Department to subpoena the records of libraries and bookstores. The librarians succeeded in getting the House to adopt language protecting library records in 2005—only to have it stripped from the bill to which it was attached by an Administration-friendly House-Senate conference committee.

But the librarians have not just been lobbying to change the Patriot Act, they've been on the front lines of exposing its abuses. When four Connecticut librarians challenged an attempt by the FBI to use a National Security Letter to obtain records of who was reading what in that state, the Justice Department slapped a gag order on them. But the 64,000-member ALA and its Freedom to Read Foundation stood up for the librarians, working with the American Civil Liberties Union, the Association of American Publishers and the American Booksellers Foundation for Free Expression to make a federal case of the issue. In May, after the FBI dropped its defense of the gag order—and shortly before it withdrew its demand for the records—a federal appeals court declared that order moot, and the librarians were at last free to speak out. Peter Chase, director of the Plainville, Connecticut, public library, explained that he and his fellow librarians decided to fight because of their frustration at receiving the National Security Letter even as "the government was telling Congress that it didn't use the Patriot Act against libraries and that no one's rights had been violated. I felt that I just could not be part of this fraud being foisted on our nation."

The ALA isn't the only group challenging the Administration's disregard for basic liberties. The American Bar Association is investigating whether George W. Bush exceeded his constitutional authority when he reserved the right to ignore more than 750 laws enacted since he took office. The American Medical Association has adopted guidelines that make it unethical for physicians to participate in interrogating detainees. And 399 communities and eight states have answered the Bill of Rights Defense Committee's call for passing resolutions upholding civil liberties.

Those defenders of basic rights are the patriotic heroes of this Fourth of July, as are those who exercise those rights, like the Code Pink members, who will fast for peace outside the Bush White House on the Fourth, and the Raging Grannies, who will join parades and picnics around the country. Fittingly, in the city where it all began, a fife-and-drum corps will lead a parade of anti–Iraq War activists through the streets of Philadelphia on the eve of the Fourth to a gathering where they will sign a Declaration of Peace. They are responding to Paine's call, as relevant now as it was more than 200 years ago: "Ye that dare oppose not only the tyranny but the tyrant, stand forth!"

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COMMENT

The Nation.

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Chilling the Press

Last December Gabriel Schoenfeld, senior editor of *Commentary*, sat down to review James Risen's book *State of War: The Secret History of the CIA and the Bush Administration*, a portion of which had just appeared, to much acclaim and controversy, on page one of the *New York Times* and would later garner Risen and Eric Lichtblau a Pulitzer Prize. As he read the book Schoenfeld wondered, "Is it legal to publish this kind of stuff?" Risen's explosive revelations about the National Security Agency's domestic surveillance program enraged Schoenfeld, who decided to abandon his review and embark instead on a more ambitious essay about espionage and leaks. In recent months that essay—"Has *The New York Times* Violated the Espionage Act?," which appeared in the March issue of *Commentary*—has taken on a life of its own and has brought its author a certain degree of fame and notoriety. His influence may expand as the *Times* and other newspapers endure Republican fury and calls for prosecution as a result of their June 22 decision to publish a story revealing a secret government financial tracking program.

In his research into the 1917 Espionage Act and subsequent espionage statutes, Schoenfeld discovered Section 798 of the US Criminal Code, enacted by Congress in 1950, which reads, "Whoever knowingly and willingly communicates, furnishes, transmits or otherwise makes available to an unauthorized person, or *publishes...any classified information...concerning the communication intelligence activities of the United States*...shall be fined not more than $10,000 or imprisoned not more than ten years, or both." (His italics.) This, Schoenfeld believed, was the "completely unambiguous" smoking gun he needed against Risen and the *Times*—both of whom, he felt, had "damaged critical intelligence capabilities" and undermined national security with the NSA story. Schoenfeld knew when he wrote the essay that no journalist had ever been prosecuted under Section 798, but his purpose was to stiffen the spine of the Justice Department. "The laws governing what the *Times* has done are perfectly clear," he concluded. "Will they be enforced?"

Schoenfeld's essay caught the eye of a producer at *The NewsHour With Jim Lehrer*, who invited him on the show on April 25. "The rest is history," Schoenfeld says. He was subsequently invited to testify twice before Congress: In May and June he appeared before the House Intelligence Committee and the Senate Judiciary Committee, where he more or less summarized the *Commentary* essay. Schoenfeld, who has written half a dozen pieces for the *Times* since 1990, also appeared on MSNBC's *The Abrams Report* and was granted space on the op-ed page of the *Los Angeles Times*.

Some press critics were quick to contest Schoenfeld's arguments. Writing in *Slate*, Jack Shafer noted that under the logic employed by *Commentary*, many leading national security reporters could be prosecuted under Section 798, including Bill Gertz of the *Washington Times* (for a 2000 story titled "Russian Merchant Ships Used in Spying" that relied on CIA and NSA documents), James Bamford (for a 2006 story in *The Atlantic* on

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the successful efforts of the NSA to target Islamic militants in Yemen), Bob Woodward (for divulging in his book *Plan of Attack* that Iraq had "the kind of old-line Soviet coding equipment that NSA knew well and could crack") and Seymour Hersh (who drew heavily on NSA documents for a 2001 story in *The New Yorker* on the machinations of the Saudi royal family). Shafer cited a dozen other reporters who could conceivably be jailed, including Stephen Hayes of *The Weekly Standard*.

Other Schoenfeld critics leaped into the fray with a series of letters that appear in the June *Commentary*. In one letter Steven Aftergood of the Federation of American Scientists takes aim at the sweeping nature of the law and notes that he recently obtained a historical document regarding the NSA budget for 1972—a figure that remains classified. "Should I therefore be prosecuted? Should *Commentary* be penalized for publishing the information in this letter? That would be absurd." "My view," proclaims Morton Halperin of the Open Society Institute in another letter, is that the *Times* "may have violated a criminal statute but that its conduct was far from shameful." Thunders Ohio University professor Joe Bernt: "If letting the public know that we have a law-violating President who needs to be impeached violates the law, I only hope the *New York Times* continues to violate the laws of tyrants."

Is the *Times* vulnerable to prosecution? On May 21 US Attorney General Alberto Gonzales declared that there is "a possibility" that journalists can be prosecuted for publishing classified information. Most experts doubt that the government would attempt such a maneuver. Says Geoffrey Stone, professor of law at the University of Chicago and author of *Perilous Times: Free Speech in Wartime*, "The fact is that the US government, in 215 years, has *never once* prosecuted the press for publishing government secrets." In Stone's view the 1950 law is "clearly unconstitutional. It includes no reference whatever to clear and present danger or any other level of harm to the national security."

Others agree. "While in theory the *Times* might be vulnerable," notes Boston defense attorney Harvey Silverglate, "there are arguable defenses. And besides, where is the Department of Justice going to get a twelve-citizen jury to unanimously buy the government's view that the *Times* is a criminal but the Bush Administration is not?" Schoenfeld says he cannot imagine a government prosecution: "Before my essay came out, I would say the chance was zero percent. After the article came out, the odds have risen to .05 percent." Then what did he achieve with the essay? "I hope," he says, "that I set in motion a 'chilling effect,' however slight, when it comes to the publication of sensitive and highly classified counterterrorism programs, the illegal disclosure of which may make it easier for radical Islamists to strike us again."

In recent months Schoenfeld's essay certainly appears to have provided intellectual ammunition for those who would censor and punish the press. His arguments have already been reproduced in the *Wall Street Journal*, *National Review* and *The New Criterion*; by Accuracy in Media; and by pundits like Michael Barone. Fortunately, some top newspaper editors seem to be waking up to the dangers. "I'm not sure journalists fully appreciate the threat confronting us," *Times* executive editor Bill Keller recently told *National Journal*, citing "the *Times* in the eavesdropping case, the *Post* for its CIA prison stories and everyone else who has tried to look behind the 'war on terror.'"

Critics of the *Times* will no doubt brandish the Schoenfeld essay in their current offensive against the paper for printing the Swift database story, also by Risen and Lichtblau. What are Keller's thoughts on the piece? "I like to think the American electorate," Keller told *The Nation* before the Swift controversy erupted, "would not look kindly on the federal government seeking to lock up journalists as spies. Even if you accept at face value the polls on media credibility, I think Americans are proud of having a free press and would find an espionage prosecution to be a chilling governmental overreach." SCOTT SHERMAN

Scott Sherman is a Nation *contributing writer.*

Harlan County Blues

Almost every day in Kentucky, we learn a little more about what killed five Harlan County miners in May. We've learned that cheap foam seals, opposed by the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA), allowed for a buildup of methane in the mine and may also have been to blame for the explosion at the Sago mine in West Virginia. And we've learned that the seals were improperly built and coated with a sealant that wasn't approved for mine use.

Still, the majority of miners at both Sago and the Darby No. 1 mine in Harlan survived the initial blasts. They died because their self-rescuers held only an hour's worth of oxygen. In the late 1990s the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) proposed installing more caches of oxygen inside the mines. But the Bush Administration, under former mining executive David Lauriski, withdrew that idea in September 2001, calling it cost-prohibitive. Back in 1997, as general manager of Energy West Mining Company, Lauriski lobbied MSHA to raise fourfold the amount of coal dust allowed in underground mines. Once installed to oversee the agency, he began pushing the proposal again. The irony here is obscene: A man put in charge

BARBARA EPSTEIN

In 1963 a handful of distinguished literary intellectuals launched *The New York Review of Books* as an antidote to the lackluster prose and middlebrow sensibility of the *New York Times Book Review*. For forty-three years the journal was edited by Robert Silvers and Barbara Epstein, who died June 16. What remained constant in the *Review* was a unique editorial alchemy: a fusion of literary sophistication with hard-nosed political analysis and an ongoing ability to match the finest minds to the finest books. Indeed, go to the *Review*'s brilliantly designed electronic archive and type in the title of nearly any major work published since 1963. In all likelihood the quality of the essay that pops up on the screen will range from impressive to dazzling. Thanks to the web, the life's work of Barbara Epstein remains fresh and accessible—and as stirring as ever.

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COMMENT

of enforcing federal mine safety decided to put miners at much greater risk of contracting black lung disease, purely in the name of profit for his former employer.

Another bitter irony is that the thirtieth anniversary DVD of Barbara Kopple's documentary *Harlan County U.S.A.* was released the same week the Harlan County miners died. The confluence of these events is cause for reflection.

Kopple's Oscar-winning documentary chronicles a thirteen-month strike at the Brookside Mine in Harlan County, Kentucky. In 1973 the Brookside miners joined the UMWA, but Duke Power refused to accept a union contract. The miners went out on strike, and an escalating fight ensued between gun thugs hired by Duke Power and the men and women on the picket line. Finally, a Duke Power employee shot miner Lawrence Jones in the face one night and Jones died at the hospital. On the elegy "Lawrence Jones," from the extraordinary reissued and expanded soundtrack, *Harlan County U.S.A.: Songs of the Miner's Struggle* (Rounder), Bela Fleck plays a haunting banjo as Phyllis Boyens sings:

> *There's blood upon your contract like vinegar in your wine*
> *'cause there's one man dead on the Harlan County line.*

Sensing the violence and bad press about to be unleashed, the company quickly started negotiations with the union miners.

That's the bones of it. But *Harlan County U.S.A.* is hardly a straightforward narrative. Kopple's genius is to reveal slowly—through backstory, testimony, archival footage and music—the political, historical and economic forces that led to this long standoff in one of the country's poorest places. "In Harlan County, all our lives we've been kicked around," a miner tells a room full of Duke Power shareholders toward the middle of the strike. Fundamentally, *Harlan County U.S.A.* is a portrait of a community tired of being kicked around and grasping for the means to kick back.

While the Brookside strike did end in a union contract, it proved to be a minor victory for labor. Today, there's not a single union mine in Harlan County. And yet as Roger Ebert said on a panel last year at Sundance (one of the extras on the new DVD, along with commentary by Kopple, singer Hazel Dickens and *Matewan* director John Sayles), *Harlan County U.S.A.* "is more important today than it was then." Now as then, the odds of forcing large coal companies to do the right thing remain long.

CALVIN TRILLIN

Historical Note

Iraq's like Budapest in '56,
Bush said, and Hungary deserves our thanks
For joining (for a while) the fighting there—
And this time on the side that has the tanks.

For one reason, the people of central Appalachia live in steep, remote mountains, and the media's interest in them rarely reaches beyond hillbilly stereotypes (Kopple's empathy for the miners and their wives—her refusal to see them as clichés—is one of the film's many virtues). In addition, the Kentucky and West Virginia state legislatures were long ago bought off with coal money. This year in Kentucky a bill to stop burying mountain streams with coal waste never got out of committee—in a state where 95 percent of headwater streams have been contaminated by mine waste, according to the EPA. And finally, there's the $100,000 that Massey Energy donated to the Republican Senate Campaign Committee, headed by Kentucky Senator Mitch McConnell. In large part because McConnell is married to Labor Secretary Elaine Chao, the coal industry has poured more than $9 million into Republican coffers during the past four years. In return, according to a Knight-Ridder survey, MSHA under the Bush Administration has issued fewer and smaller fines, has collected on less than half of these fines and has cut 100 mine-safety enforcement jobs.

"Distance negates responsibility," wrote my teacher Guy Davenport. In *Harlan County U.S.A.* Duke Power of North Carolina was the company exploiting Kentucky families from a clean distance. Today, many of the most dangerous and environmentally destructive mines in Appalachia are run by absentee owners like Peabody Energy in St. Louis, TECO Energy in Tampa and Massey Energy in Richmond, Virginia. Thirty years ago during the Brookside strike, the coal industry was posting record profits, as it is today. While industry profits rose 170 percent in 1975, miners' wages rose only 4 percent. Today, the issue isn't wages so much as safety. One might think the high price of coal would allow for needed improvements underground, but the opposite seems true.

Last fall, in a memo to employees, Massey Energy CEO Don Blankenship wrote, "If any of you have been asked by your group presidents, your supervisors, engineers or anyone else to do anything other than run coal (i.e., build overcasts, do construction jobs, or whatever) you need to ignore them and run coal." The opening scene of *Harlan County U.S.A.* shows a miner doing one such "construction job"—installing a support beam so he can work in a forty-two-inch shaft without its roof collapsing on him. But to Blankenship, the record profits mean that conveyor belts—like Midwestern meat-packing lines—must run even faster. According to the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, a MSHA inspector tried to close part of a Massey mine in West Virginia in January because of a buildup of flammable coal waste along the mine's conveyor belt. But a superior told him to back off so the company could "run coal." On January 19 a fire broke out, killing two miners. Massey still refuses to cooperate in the investigation of their deaths. Thirty-seven more men have been killed in the mines since Blankenship issued his memo, largely because production has trumped safety. Regrettably, it has always taken high casualties to force our political hirelings to strengthen mine-safety laws. On June 15, with widows and other family members looking on, George W. Bush signed legislation that required more oxygen in the mines and more rescue teams. But whether MSHA will actually enforce the new law is another matter entirely.

That Elaine Chao has nominated former Massey executive

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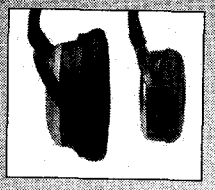

QC2 headphones (left). New QC3 headphones (right).

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COMMENT

Richard Stickler to replace David Lauriski as head of MSHA is not an encouraging sign. Also distressing is Bush's nomination of former Lauriski deputy John Correll to head the Office of Surface Mining. He was part of the Lauriski team that canceled or delayed eighteen mine-safety rules at MSHA. And Correll, no surprise here, also comes from the industry he might now be asked to regulate. It looks like the next two years will mean more toxic streams, deadly floods and mudslides, and oppressive coal dust for the communities below these strip mines. As a recent *Lexington Herald-Leader* editorial lamented, "It's probably too much to hope that Kentucky Sens. Mitch McConnell and Jim Bunning would put the interests of their constituents above those of the coal industry."

Which is to say, we do fatalism pretty well around here. When you watch entire ranges destroyed by mountaintop removal mining and hear constant stories of unsafe deep mines, it's hard not to expect the worst. One even senses it in the lyrics of pioneering folk songwriter Hazel Dickens as she sings over the closing credits of *Harlan County U.S.A.*:

The power wheel is rollin' rollin' right along
and the government will keep it goin' goin' strong.
So working people get your help from your own kind.
Your welfare ain't on that rich man's mind.

If the past six months have clarified anything, it is that life remains cheap in the coalfields, and many far-removed CEOs like it that way. Is it too much, then, to hope? At a recent commencement address here in Lexington, Nobel laureate and poet Seamus Heaney put it this way: Hope is not optimism, which expects things to turn out well, but "something rooted in the conviction that there is good worth working for." One sees few reasons for optimism these days, but the Bush Administration's incompetence and neglect in the face of human and environmental tragedies clearly reveals that there is much good work that now needs doing. ERIK REECE

Erik Reece is the author of Lost Mountain: A Year in the Vanishing Wilderness *(Riverhead).*

Project Corpus Callosum

For this year's first-ever Nation *Student Writing Contest we asked students to send us an original, unpublished 800-word essay telling us what issue defines their generation. We received more than 700 submissions from high school and college students in forty-one states. The entries arrived from north, south, east and west, from big public institutions and tiny liberal arts colleges, from rural high schools and penitentiary writing programs, from Indian reservations and large urban centers. Climate change and environmental catastrophe in general were among the most pervasive topics, but apathy, corporate capitalism run amok and issues confronting immigrant communities were often cited as well. We chose one winning essay—"Project Corpus Callosum" by Sarah Stillman of Yale University, printed below—and five finalists, which you can read at www.thenation.com/student. The winner receives a cash award of $1,000, and the finalists receive $100 each. All receive* Nation *subscriptions.* —*The Editors*

I never expected to find the secret of my generation's political salvation floating inside a clear glass jar of formaldehyde. Yet there it was, pickled and perched on a lectern before some 200 mesmerized Neuroscience 101 students: a corpus callosum that had been surgically removed from the brain of an epileptic patient. A bewildering network of almost 300 million interlacing nerve fibers, the corpus callosum is known for its role in connecting the "left brain" (the hemisphere of analytical, verbal and quantitative calculations) with the "right brain" (the hemisphere of intuitive, nonverbal and imaginative thought processes). As I listened to my professor describe the devastating effects of extracting the corpus callosum—for instance, one exasperated patient pulling up his pants with his left hand as he pulled them down with his right—it occurred to me that this might be the ideal metaphor to describe the split-brained status of my own activist generation.

On the one hand, young Americans today are angry, confused and acutely aware of our domestic and global state of emergency. As the Iraq debacle spirals out of control, the US Army desperately funnels millions into new advertising campaigns designed to lure disillusioned youth into its ranks. An unprecedented prison boom continues to lock some 100,000 of us (particularly young men of color) behind bars while the government slashes funding for educational scholarships and other alternatives to youthful incarceration. Those of us blessed with the good luck of making it to college, like me, will graduate with an average of $20,000 in loans to be repaid at the same time that real wages stagnate and healthcare costs soar.

On the other hand, despite this litany of social crises, student mobilizations seem to be the sole property of our French contemporaries, not to mention our parents, with their nostalgic reminiscences of '68. Contrary to popular belief, apathy is not our generation's major obstacle. Our left brains are working furiously to catalogue and explain innumerable injustices, while our right brains scream that we must respond creatively. Our real impediment, then, is that we are a generation with an atrophied corpus callosum, utterly confounded about how to bridge our intellectual realizations about social problems with our imaginative capacity to enact solutions. Consider that many of us got our first taste of student activism in the mid-1990s, during the Golden Age of the Exposé. Back then, most

(Continued on Page 22)

SUMMER SCHEDULE: With this issue, we begin our biweekly schedule, which continues until the end of August.

* * *

ON THE WEB: Read an excerpt from Jack Huberman's *101 People Who Are* Really *Screwing America.* Jennifer Nix explains how savvy marketing on blogs helped make *How Would a Patriot Act?* a bestseller. And Mark Sorkin takes a look inside California's broken juvenile justice system (www.thenation.com).

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ALEXANDER COCKBURN

Temple of Mammon, Planet of Doom

When Frank Gehry gets around to designing America's answer to the Sistine Chapel, I trust this postmodern Temple of Mammon on Las Vegas Boulevard will have a ceiling fresco depicting Warren Buffett's consignment of $31 billion to Bill and Melinda Gates. As the older billionaire sits on his pillow of cloud, his outthrust hand with its bag of securities is grasped by Gates—the Adam of Software Commerce—while seraphs and cherubs muse delightedly over the IRS regulations governing the sheltering of Buffett's swag in tax-exempt nonprofit foundations.

Let us not waste too much time here advising Mr. and Mrs. Gates how to spend Buffett's money. At the moment it seems that the Gates couple's core focus is the war on AIDS and malaria, both ravaging Africa. How to improve the Dark Continent's overall well-being? America's senators and representatives can be bought for bargain-basement sums. A modest disbursement by the Gates Foundation—let us say $50,000 for each senator and $20,000 for each rep—would most certainly buy enough votes to end the current government subsidy, $4.5 billion for 2004, to cotton growers. The entire crop that year, the last for which figures are available, was worth $5.9 billion and the subsidy enables US growers to export three-quarters of their harvest and control about 40 percent of world trade, thus destroying the farm economies of countries like Mozambique, Benin and Mali. The WTO found the United States in violation this spring, but the ten largest cotton growers here—virtuous Jeffersonian toilers such as Kelley Enterprises and JG Boswell—have the necessary political clout to keep the subsidies coming.

With overthrow of the cotton subsidy as a pilot program, Gates could launch a wider onslaught on the subsidies doled out to large wheat, rice and corn growers. Economists are slightly more costly than politicians, but generous Gates "scholarships" to prominent neoliberal economists would be contingent on these economists' swift revision of their foolish theories, currently ravaging rural India.

In Vidharbha, a cotton-growing area of the state of Maharashtra, journalist P. Sainath has reported in *The Hindu* that 540 suicides of ruined cotton farmers occurred between June 2005 and May 2006. As many as 325 farmers have killed themselves since January. May saw nearly eighty farmers taking their own lives, ten of them doing so on a single day. Some weeks, Sainath reports, there have been suicides every eight hours, usually by the ingestion of pesticide.

The reason for this catastrophe is the neoliberal onslaught on India's peasantry, which has been advancing without remit for more than the past decade, promoted by the World Bank and executed by India's federal and state governments. The traditional NGO approach—ecstatic boasts in grant applications and annual reports, zero benefits for the farmers—has been futile. It should be the job of the Gates Foundation to turn the tide inside the ivory towers generating the economic nonsense that has wrought such a dreadful toll.

One particularly delightful aspect of Buffett's $31 billion transfer was its stately mime of the Great American Pageant. Here was no twitchy trader but Buffett the wise investor, cherishing his favored stocks over decades, ambling around his headquarters in homely Omaha. And here was the younger entrepreneur, no longer the ruthless Master of Microsoft but the Third World's Santa Claus.

Could America desire any more potent evocation of virtuous capitalism at work? Surely not. And is this not a good time to evoke such virtues? It surely is, because it's clear, as we head into the summer of 2006, that the world capitalist system is out of control. Literally so. In the older order of things, international bodies such as the International Monetary Fund, the central banks and kindred bodies could claim to have some purchase on the overall situation. Not anymore. The major players these days are thousands of managers of private equity funds—traders in shares, bonds, derivatives and other instruments of a complexity that would require the genius of the late Stanislaw Lem to evoke, as he did the planet of Solaris.

It's virtually impossible now to penetrate, let alone oversee, this vast Solaris of speculative recycling of financial instruments such as credit derivatives. As the historian Gabriel Kolko recently remarked in an essay (www.counterpunch.org/kolko06152006.html) on the looming crisis, "The credit derivative market was almost nonexistent in 2001, grew fairly slowly until 2004 and then went into the stratosphere, reaching $17.3 trillion by the end of 2005. Banks simply do not understand the chain of exposure and who owns what. Senior financial regulators and bankers now admit as much. The Long-Term Capital Management hedge fund meltdown in 1998, which involved only about $5 billion in equity, revealed this. The financial structure is now infinitely more complex and far larger. The top 10 hedge funds alone in March 2006 had $157 billion in assets."

The Bank for International Settlements is no circus tent Cassandra shrieking about the onrush of Doom. Bankers don't shriek. But here's the BIS, trembling before its crystal ball and talking, in its most recent annual report, about "planning for the worst.... Consider first a discrete event which, if it occurred, would disrupt financial markets. What might be done in advance to prepare for such an eventuality? One important step would be to ensure the integrity of domestic lines of communication among core financial firms, their supervisors, the central bank and the operators of systemically critical parts of the financial infrastructure. Another would be to ensure similar openness at the international level.... Stress testing is now almost universal in financial firms, which is highly desirable. Yet stress tests are based on simplifying assumptions that necessarily fail to match the complexity of real world events." That's a banker's way of saying, "The show could blow up tomorrow, and there may not be any way to stop it." Steve Wynn should get Gehry to work on the Temple of Mammon sooner rather than later. ■

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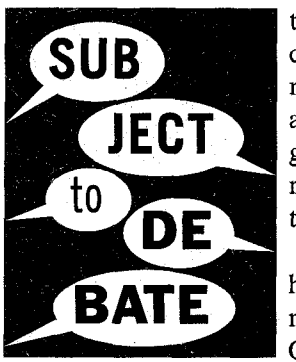
KATHA POLLITT

Mommy Wars, Round 587



Caitlin Flanagan, scourge of upscale working mothers, meet Linda Hirshman, champion of same. You'll like each other, you have a lot in common: a bomb-throwing writing style, a gift for oversimplification and a deep conviction that your life is the one true path to happiness and glory. (Well, let me amend that, because Flanagan, whose loopy attacks on working mothers in *The New Yorker* and *The Atlantic* have been collected in *To Hell With All That*, seems not to understand that she is a working mother herself—and a very well compensated, nannified, cleaning-ladied and personally assisted one at that.) Here's another thing you two agree on: Whatever women are doing wrong is feminism's fault. Flanagan thinks the women's movement has filled women's heads with silly notions of independence, equality and achievement that have ruined family and community life. Hirshman thinks it stood up for those values for about two minutes, before filling women's heads with namby-pamby twaddle about "choice." Rock the world or rock the cradle? Use your diploma or tuck it in a drawer? Equal spouse or trusty sidekick? Whatever you want, sweetheart!

Hirshman first made her vigorous, no-holds-barred case against stay-home motherhood in an article called "Homeward Bound," in *The American Prospect*. She got a huge amount of media attention—at last, a feminist who admits she thinks stay-home moms are wasting their lives!—and has now expanded the essay into a (very slender) book, *Get to Work: A Manifesto for Women of the World*. Fans of the original article will be pleased to know that the book preserves the abrasive, my-way-or-the-highway features of the essay. *Don't* major in art. *Do* prepare yourself for a lifetime of work—and by work Hirshman means things like corporate law and business, not social work or, I fear, writing for *The Nation*. *Don't* ever "know when you're out of milk"—i.e., don't take on the role of domestic expert. *Do* "marry down"—i.e., a lower-earning husband, so his job won't be more important than yours. *Don't* have more than one child.

It's easy to make fun of Hirshman's directives. Corporate lawyers are miserable! Everyone should know if there's milk in the fridge! As for marrying down, well, whatever floats your boat, but anyone who thinks a less successful husband means a more equal marriage doesn't know much about men, or women either. Her potted history of second-wave feminism as a contest between a properly "judgmental" pro-work Betty Friedan and a wishy-washy "choice feminist" Gloria Steinem is off the mark too. For Friedan the enemy was not stay-home moms but "man-hating" feminists and lesbians; Steinem, for her part, could be plenty judgmental: I once heard her compare women who enjoyed pornography to Jews who enjoyed *Mein Kampf*. On work and family, though, both women had similar, flexible views, as indeed any leader who hoped to make a mass movement would need to have.

That said, there's something refreshing about Hirshman. Why should the antifeminists monopolize the high ground? It's about time someone asked, again, such basic questions as: If cleaning the house is so fulfilling, how come men don't want to do it, and how can you get them to do it anyway (cf., milk, obliviousness to lack of)? And if having a mom at home is so beneficial to kids, how come even Flanagan admits she could see no difference in children raised by stay-homes and working mothers except that the working mothers' kids seemed smarter?

Like other kinds of conservatives, antifeminists have no problem engaging in moral discourse. Feminists have indeed traded that language for the I'm-OK-you're-OK language of personal choice, and are now in the philosophically absurd position of smiling politely at everything women do, from naked mud wrestling to home schooling. But what happens when the choice is a bad idea, for yourself, for other women, for society? Don't we ever get to talk about that? "Choice," moreover, assumes people have, and know they have, real alternatives. But what if the "choice" is the forced, or at any rate predictable, result of a lot of previous choices you didn't realize you were making? (This crucial insight was not originally Hirshman's but Rhona Mahony's, in her brilliant 1995 *Kidding Ourselves*, on which Hirshman rather heavily relies.) Antifeminists are always telling young women to be strategic—restrain your ambitions, marry straight out of college, have kids right away or end up alone and infertile. It's about time feminists pointed out that equality at home and on the job takes planning. Hirshman's gotten flak for advising women to have only one child, and only with a man who agrees to be an equal parent. (As it happens, most of the professionally successful mothers I know have two kids.) But a few months ago the *New York Times* front page featured an upscale businesswoman who was astonished to find that having a third child sent her careful balancing act tumbling down. How, I found myself wondering, could that have come as a shock?

Hirshman's weakness is her assumption that the social problem of women's inequality can be solved if enough women make the right individual decisions. She mocks "the same old public day-care business that has gone nowhere since 1972." But really, isn't the stay-home vogue at bottom a response to the fact that society has failed to adapt to working mothers? Isn't choice feminism itself a way of dealing with the whole complex range of resistance to women's equality, by throwing up your hands and saying, Let each woman make her own tradeoffs? Unlike Flanagan, who wants women to give up the struggle, Hirshman wants individual women to fight harder and smarter, and that's great. But it only goes so far. If better personal decisions could bring about gender equality, we wouldn't be having this conversation today.

* * *

Finally! Bernard Baran, whom I've written about here several times, just won the right to a new trial. In 1985 Baran, a 19-year-old teacher's aide in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, became the first person convicted in the great wave of daycare sex-panic cases of the 1980s and '90s; he's been in prison more than half his life. *Nation* readers have particular reason to rejoice: Their generous donations helped fuel his appeal. ■

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ARTICLES

THE COMING BALLOT MELTDOWN

OHIO COULD BE THE PLACE —AGAIN

by ANDREW GUMBEL

Columbus

Anyone wondering where America's next electoral meltdown will take place—and it can only be a matter of time—might do well to turn back to the scene of the last one. Ohio was, of course, ground zero of the 2004 presidential election, and now it's the battleground of one of the most hotly contested governor's races in the country. The Republican candidate this November is none other than Kenneth Blackwell, Ohio's Secretary of State, a man vilified by voting rights activists for a string of baffling and, to all appearances, nakedly partisan rulings in the 2004 presidential race, when he also doubled as co-chair of George Bush's state re-election campaign. Now he's at it again—issuing draconian guidelines on voter registration that carry the threat of felony prosecutions against grassroots get-out-the-vote groups, especially in Democratic-leaning urban areas, for even the slightest procedural irregularity. Despite denials from Blackwell's office of any malicious political intent, the guidelines have had an immediate chilling effect on groups like the activist community organization ACORN, which has suspended registration efforts pending urgent consultations with its lawyers. Several leading Democrats have urged Blackwell to step aside from all election-supervising responsibilities, a proposal his staff has greeted with near-derision.

It would be bad enough if Blackwell were acting merely to benefit his party, as he did in 2004. But in this case he's taking advantage of his office to act on behalf of his own ambitions. Unless something changes between now and November, he will remain in charge of counting the votes—his own and everyone else's. In a pivotal election in a pivotal state, this is far from reassuring. As Peg Rosenfield, an elections specialist with the League of Women Voters of Ohio who spent twelve years working in the secretary of state's office in the pre-Blackwell era, put it, "If you think '04 was a mess, just wait. I anticipate a debacle."

Blackwell and his Democratic challenger, Ted Strickland, are locked in a tough fight over the succession to Bob Taft, the scandal-tainted, widely reviled incumbent governor, whose approval ratings are lower even than Dick Cheney's. Early polls have put Strickland modestly ahead, but Blackwell has several built-in advantages, particularly his ability to lean on an entrenched Republican establishment and tap into its broad fund-raising powers. Blackwell has largely escaped the stench of corruption dragging down the rest of the state party, thanks to his reputation as a maverick and a lone operator. As a social conservative, he appeals to much the same exurban demographic that turned out for George W. Bush to express their disapproval of abortion rights and gay marriage. And, as an African-American, he is bound to peel away at least a percentage of the urban black vote that Strickland might otherwise regard as his for the taking. So it's not inconceivable, as the nation awakes on November 8, that the Ohio governor's race will be too close to call. And if that happens, all hell will break loose.

"If we have a recount, I see no way anyone is going to have any faith in it. It's a poisonous atmosphere," Rosenfield said. Never, she added, has she seen the elections process subject to as much politicization as now. Previous secretaries of state, conscious of their status as partisan elected officials, would have gone out of their way to keep their names off election-related directives that risked being interpreted as attempts to help one party over the other. Blackwell, by contrast, has if anything gone out of his way to be identified with his office's most controversial rules. (In 2004 he happily put his name on a now-notorious directive that late voter-registration applications—the kind encouraged by Democratic grassroots groups—be submitted on specially weighted, unwaxed paper, which disqualified applications printed in Ohio newspapers. He also made it unusually hard for voters casting provisional ballots—again,

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Margaret Cho is a longstanding **Nation** *reader.*

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more likely to be Democrats—to have their votes accepted and counted.)

On top of that, Rosenfield added, Blackwell's office has shown a wanton disregard for the needs of Ohio's eighty-eight counties as they make the Congressionally mandated transition from punch-card and lever machines to new-generation electronic voting systems. Rather than answer technical questions posed by the counties—which is how Rosenfield spent much of her time when she worked for the secretary of state's office in the 1980s—Blackwell's staff has a habit of referring county boards of elections to other local officials not remotely qualified to help.

The technicalities of the voting process were already a huge problem in 2004, when everything from the updating of voter registration lists to the number of voting machines made available in each precinct to the opening hours of polling stations was subject to undue political influence and rank bureaucratic incompetence, prompting an avalanche of complaints. (Blackwell's office rejected every last one of them.) That election, though, was held predominantly with the old machinery, which may have lost an unacceptable number of honestly cast votes but at least had the virtue of familiarity. Now the advent of e-voting has opened up a whole new world of pain for election officials and their woefully undertrained precinct volunteers. The first big test of the new machines, in the May primary election, resulted in a multiplicity of problems, especially in Cuyahoga County in and around Cleveland, where poll workers lost seventy memory cards recording the votes from electronic touch-screen terminals (the votes had to be retrieved through back-up data systems inside the terminals) and more than 15,000 paper absentee ballots had to be counted by hand, delaying the results by six days, because of a system failure in the automated tabulation system. And that was on a turnout rate of only 23 percent.

'We've made this [voting process] so complex, I'm not sure we're capable of administering it.'
—Peg Rosenfield, League of Women Voters

"Our turnout in the fall is bound to be over 50 percent," Rosenfield said. "That'll include a lot of less sophisticated voters struggling with new machines and new rules. The poll workers still won't be trained well enough. The boards won't know how to get the equipment ready.... The secretary of state's office isn't providing resources to the counties—no money to attend training sessions, no expertise to answer questions or provide technical support.... We've made this so complex, I'm not sure we're capable of administering it."

The story of Ohio's adoption of new voting technology and the mess it is creating is in many ways typical of the overhasty and shockingly underregulated rush across the country to comply with the 2002 Help America Vote Act (HAVA). But Ohio has also followed its own peculiar trajectory, teaching us above all how difficult it is to prevent the elemental viciousness of two-party politics from compromising the integrity and safety of our voting systems.

Back in 2003 Ohio was admirably skeptical about the lure of computer voting—even though the parent company of Diebold Election Systems was based in Ohio and its chief executive, Wally O'Dell, was a prominent campaign contributor to the state and national Republican Party. O'Dell notoriously wrote a fundraising letter in August 2003 declaring himself "committed to helping Ohio deliver its electoral votes to the president next year." If this was some dark hint that Diebold intended to collude with the Republicans in stealing the 2004 election—something that, in retrospect, seems a lot more doubtful than many voting rights activists feared at the time—Ohio's Republican establishment was not especially inclined to play ball. The source code for Diebold's AccuVote-TS touch-screen system had been left lying around on an open Internet site and was scrutinized by a team of top-flight computer scientists from Rice and Johns Hopkins universities, who found it to be riddled with security flaws and basic programming errors. Ken Blackwell decided to order a comprehensive technical review of all touch-screen voting systems and subsequently decided to postpone a major statewide buy of electronic machines until after the 2004 election. The Republican-dominated state legislature, meanwhile, proved remarkably receptive to arguments in favor of fitting the touch screens with a voter-verified paper audit trail so their results could be independently verified in a close or contested election. A state law mandating a paper trail was passed in early 2004.

That cautious, consensus-oriented approach evaporated, however, in the heat of the 2004 campaign season. A state planning committee on HAVA implementation that had met several times was never invited to convene again, despite a barrage of new questions raised across the country about the integrity of electronic touch-screen and tabulation systems being sold by Diebold and its principal rivals, Election Systems and Software (ES&S) and Sequoia. Right after the 2004 election, Governor Taft signed a law increasing the limit on campaign contributions by individuals or political action committees from $2,500 to $10,000—a move widely seen as benefiting Republicans more than Democrats. Around the same time, Blackwell compounded the conflict-of-interest issue by buying himself just under $10,000 of Diebold stock. (He later sold, at a loss, after his shareholding became public.) For several months last year and stretching into this, the Republican state legislature expended its energies on mandating an ID requirement at polling stations. At best this was an unnecessary solution to a nonexistent problem, since there was no evidence of significant ballot fraud at the individual voter level; at worst it was another baldly partisan maneuver, because the 12 percent of the adult population without driver's licenses, the most readily available form of government ID, tend to be poor, elderly or both, and thus likely to lean Democrat.

The law that finally enshrined the voter-ID requirement, House Bill 3, contained another couple of nasty surprises: a big jump in the cost of petitioning for a manual recount, from $100 per precinct to $500 per precinct, and the lifting of a previous requirement that counties use the independent paper trail to conduct random audits of their touch-screen machinery after every election. In other words, Ohio—like many other states—has now

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Andrew Gumbel is the author of Steal This Vote: Dirty Elections and the Rotten History of Democracy in America *(Nation Books) and a US correspondent for* The Independent *of London.* *Research support was provided by the Investigative Fund of The Nation Institute.*

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become a recount-hostile environment with greatly diminished accountability all around. Since paperless electronic system votes are almost impossible to verify without recourse to the paper trail, this is a truly chilling development.

What the Republicans have created is, in effect, a system where they have multiple tools to deter their opponents from casting ballots in the first place—through the voter-ID requirement, the strict rules on provisional balloting and so on—and then making the vote count itself so opaque as to be beyond redress. The lack of transparency is a matter of bureaucratic convenience as well as political conniving: County boards of elections are generally delighted to be able to spend state and federal dollars on shiny new computer systems that do all the tricky work of vote tabulation by themselves, that don't entail large paper orders or long-term ballot storage requirements and that obviate the pain, inconvenience and extra cost of conducting recounts. Under the HAVA rules counties have the option of purchasing much cheaper, manually recountable paper-based systems, tabulated by optical scanners. Many Ohio counties have shied away from this alternative, however, because they think it is trickier to operate and requires more intensive poll-worker training. HAVA also requires at least one terminal per precinct for the use of disabled voters, which basically means a touch-screen machine. Rather than buy two separate systems, many counties prefer to go with just one.

'Every county has its own party structure, so you can launder money eighty-eight ways.'
—Catherine Turcer, Ohio Citizen Action

If counties think that touch screens are somehow the easier option, though, they're kidding themselves. Poll workers may find it easy to show voters how to use the machines when they're working, but if anything goes wrong workers are likely to be several orders of magnitude more clueless about fixing the problem. Computerized systems also entail huge hidden costs, from maintenance to security (even when the terminals are in storage) to software upgrades. Several Ohio counties have been appalled at the budget overruns they are already facing, and there is a naïveté all around, from Congress on down, about the kind of commitment these machines entail. "If the federal government thinks it can give onetime-only grants, it is wrong," said Dan Tokaji, an election law specialist at Ohio State University's Moritz Law School, who is a cautious supporter of electronic systems, at least in principle. "There needs to be ongoing federal attention." Based on the government's behavior so far—its failure to fund HAVA fully or to meet its own deadline, its failure to establish a federal regulatory body with any teeth, its failure to streamline rules on any aspect of conducting elections, leaving everything up to states and counties—nobody should hold their breath.

Another reason to regard Ohio as a bellwether of the nation's electoral health is the fact that its political complexion is changing fast—perhaps faster than any other state's. For twelve years the Republicans have had the run of the place, a length of tenure more or less guaranteed to spawn corruption, regardless of the party in power. The ethical violations, insalubrious associations and compromised integrity of Governor Taft, Representative Bob Ney and others have received widespread attention in the national press. Perhaps less well understood is that, historically speaking, there is no climate more susceptible to electoral malfeasance than one where a single party is in power and in a position to manipulate the rules to its advantage. If a race is also close and the stakes are high, as they were in 2004, then dirty electioneering is more or less a given.

Granted, there are those who have insisted since election day that John Kerry was robbed of Ohio's twenty Electoral College votes, and with them the presidency. That argument, though, is almost certainly a stretch, since Bush's official margin of victory of 120,000-odd votes is just too big to be explained away with any confidence. Certainly, most seasoned election observers in Ohio, as well as veterans of the earnest but disorganized Kerry field campaign, tend to dismiss it. (A 30,000 vote margin, given the multiplicity of the reported problems, might have been a very different story.) The problem, in the end, with many of the stolen-election theories is not that they are wrong to assume that Ohio is corrupt; it is that they have misunderstood the nature of that corruption. Many—including Robert Kennedy Jr. writing in the June 1 *Rolling Stone*—imagine Ken Blackwell as the mastermind of some coordinated Republican Party conspiracy to re-elect Bush, in which the counties fell magically in line with his or the party's directives. The reality, though, is that Blackwell's influence only went so far, and the counties—partly because of the lack of support from the secretary of state's office—acted largely on their own. The county boards of elections were, in turn, stuffed with political appointees from both parties who engaged in struggles of varying degrees of intensity. (The stereotypical image of boards of elections, which may not be that far from the truth, is one where the Democrats are sweet, well-meaning old ladies, and the Republicans are razor-sharp lawyers.) The autonomy and complexity of the counties cannot be overstressed. As Catherine Turcer, legislative director of the anticorruption group Ohio Citizen Action, put it sardonically: "Every county has its own party structure, so you can launder money eighty-eight ways."

In Cuyahoga County—which has been an election management nightmare for decades—one of the two Republican members of the board of elections is Bob Bennett, who also happens to be the state party chair. In Lucas County, in and around Toledo, the chair of the board of elections until early 2005 was Bernadette Noe, the head of the county Republican Party and the wife of Tom Noe, the man who invested $50 million of the state workers' comp fund in a rare coin fund with which he was affiliated, and lost $13 million of it. Noe has also pleaded guilty to laundering $45,000 in Bush re-election funds. Bernadette Noe, meanwhile, behaved so egregiously in the November 2004 election that Blackwell's office launched a rare investigation. It charged her with a panoply of offenses involving Republican Party volunteers under her direction who, before the election, were caught tampering with voter confirmation postcards and, on election night itself, tried to barge into the vote-counting area without authorization. Bernadette Noe was forced to resign shortly afterward, one more in a succession of prominent Ohio Republicans to be disgraced, indicted or hounded from office.

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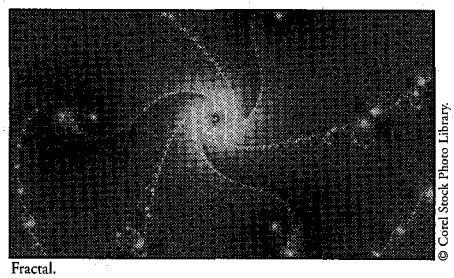

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The echo of so many recent scandals makes this a fascinating, pivotal moment in Ohio politics. The Republicans risk losing just about every statewide office this November, from the governorship to Mike DeWine's Senate seat. Some reform-minded members of both parties have seen this moment of transition as a unique opportunity to try to talk their colleagues into thinking beyond short-term party interest and considering some key voting rights issues from a more broadly public point of view. The biggest push has been toward redistricting reform: taking the process of drawing legislative and Congressional boundaries out of the hands of the politicians and handing it to a more independent, or at least bipartisan, panel so elections can become more competitive and more reflective of public opinion. Sadly, the vicious logic of the two-party system has made the prospects for such reform well-nigh impossible.

A year ago it was the Democrats, on the thin end of a 60-to-39 party balance in the Ohio house, who were pushing for a fairer way of carving up districts. Then it was the turn of a citizens' group called Reform Ohio Now, which made the redistricting question the centerpiece of a quartet of campaign-related initiatives it sponsored on last November's ballot. Those initiatives went down in flames, largely because of a concerted effort by Republicans to depict them as partisan Democratic maneuvers in disguise. Most recently it has been a handful of Republicans, notably House Speaker Jon Husted and State Representative Kevin DeWine (Mike's second cousin), who have been pushing their own version of redistricting reform. They argue that they are acting from only the noblest motives. (As DeWine told me, "If you're going to make changes, you do it when you don't know who the players might be.")

The Democrats, however, smell a rat. They reckon they will be able to win a majority of the seats on the state apportionment board—which includes the governor, the secretary of state and the state auditor—ahead of the next round of redistricting, in 2011, and suspect the initiative to be a Republican attempt to salvage something before the tables are turned against them. The Republican proposal was voted down at the end of May, and now appears to be dead. In the end, partisan rancor is prevailing over any kind of rationality. Ed Jerse, campaign manager of the Reform Ohio Now initiatives and a former Democratic state legislator, summarized the prevailing mood among Ohio Democrats this way: "You stuck it to us for twelve years and now that you are about to lose, you invite us into the room and want to be buddy-buddy? Screw that."

The losers in this whole process are, of course, the voters. Where they don't have reason to fear out-and-out political interference in the electoral vote, they can expect incompetence and chaos. Toledo, for example, may have rid itself of Bernadette Noe, but it still had a major meltdown in last November's off-season elections, which it subsequently blamed on the incompetence, lousy software and missed deadlines of its vendor, Diebold. Across the country, alarm bells have been sounded about major security flaws in electronic voting software—one such, in Diebold's TSX system, was described by Pennsylvania's leading voting-machine inspector as "the most severe security flaw ever discovered"—but Ohio appears blissfully unaware of them because of the inattention, bordering on negligence, of its secretary of state's office. Peg Rosenfield, for one, sees things as worse now than at any time in her memory. "It's not that anyone will be out to steal the election necessarily," she remarked. "They don't need to—we can screw it up all by ourselves." ■

THE PARTY HAS YET TO REVEAL A CONVINCING STRATEGY TO MOBILIZE MID-TERM VOTERS.

Where's the Plan, Democrats?

ARI BERMAN

It was the morning of June 6 and Democrats were hopeful. That Tuesday there was a special election in San Diego to replace Republican Duke Cunningham—who had pleaded guilty to bribery charges. The district was Republican, but Democrats saw the contest between Democrat Francine Busby and Republican Brian Bilbray as an opportunity to pick up a seat—and gain a boost en route to the November Congressional elections. As voters were heading to the polls in Cunningham's district, I asked Democratic Party chair Howard Dean about his party's plan to mobilize voters in the coming mid-term elections. "We're using it in Busby's district," Dean said.

JANNA BROWER

If that was the case, Democrats have reason to worry. And some are—which has led to a bruising fight in Democratic strategy circles between Dean's Democratic National Committee (DNC) and other key party operatives. Busby lost to Bilbray by four percentage points, and worse, a massive Democratic mobilization never materialized.

Dean says the DNC has two plans, short-term and long-term. His long-term plan is to rebuild the party by hiring full-time field organizers in all fifty states. Dean and his supporters, including recent convert Bill Clinton, contend that Democrats must do that if they hope to command an electoral majority in the years to come.

But the question of the moment is: Where and what is the DNC's plan for 2006? A number of top party operatives believe the DNC should take the lead in building a strong get-

Ari Berman, a Nation *contributing writer based in Washington, DC, is a Nation Institute Puffin Foundation writing fellow.*

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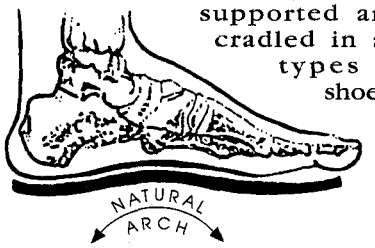

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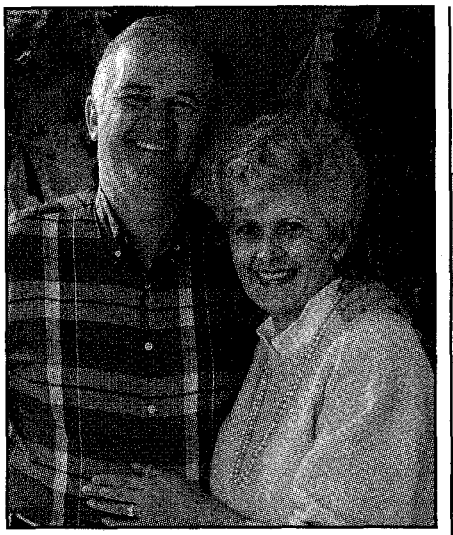

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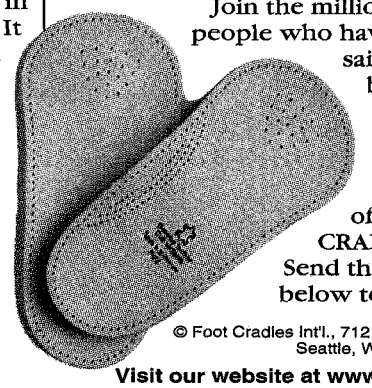

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out-the-vote (GOTV) operation for November. That means identifying probable voters, persuading them to care about the election and getting them to the polls November 7. Thus far, the operatives say, the DNC has failed to prepare adequately for the coming ground game, causing concern that Dean's long-term strategy is squandering the Democrats' best short-term opportunity in a decade to retake Congress.

Dean's immediate focus in Busby's district, as he explained to me, was to target people who voted in 2004 but not in 2002. Yet Republicans out-hustled and out-mobilized Democrats on the ground in Bilbray's victory, spending twice as much money, making six times as many phone calls to voters and airlifting in 100 staffers from Capitol Hill. "There was dramatically lower turnout than we expected," said one Democratic operative in the district. Busby got half as many votes as Kerry, and only improved upon Kerry's 44 percent take by less than 1 percent.

"That was a tough district any way you look at it," says DNC executive director Tom McMahon. "But the people we targeted turned out."

Although you can't read too much into the results of a special election in a heavily Republican area thirty miles from the Mexico border, the Busby race demonstrated that—despite all the current anti-GOP kinks in the electoral environment—Republicans are better at running the machinery of politics: raising money, working together, harnessing new technology, motivating the base, exploiting hot-button issues and getting voters to the polls.

'Democrats have not yet felt the fire and energy that they felt in 2004.'
—Ellen Malcolm, president, EMILY's List

In an off-year election, when voter participation is generally 15 to 20 percent lower than in a presidential year, turnout is critical. For Democrats that means the party has to excite its base, pursue the "dropoff voters" (who voted in 2004 but not in 2002) and court independents and disaffected Republicans. Polling suggests that the public would prefer a Democratic-controlled Congress. But politics has a lot to do with mechanics—especially when control of the House and Senate will turn on a few dozen contests come November.

"The current measures of potential Democratic turnout and enthusiasm are not impressive," Democratic pollsters James Carville and Stan Greenberg wrote in a sharply worded strategy memo a day after Busby's defeat. In mid-June only 3 percent of voters showed up for the Democratic primary to choose a Senate challenger to George Allen in Virginia, five times lower than the last contested Democratic primary. "Democrats have not yet felt the fire and energy that they felt in 2004," EMILY's List president Ellen Malcolm ominously wrote to donors recently.

Who will energize the voters is perhaps an even bigger concern. The largest progressive GOTV operation in 2004, America Coming Together (ACT), was disbanded after the election. In this vacuum, Democrats have been sparring for months over how and where to spend resources in 2006. Little more than four months from election day, Democrats are wondering if they can assemble what the Republicans already have waiting for them. How they address this problem will play a major, possibly decisive role in who controls Congress.

Elections are decided by the 3 M's: message, money, mobilization. The Democratic message, particularly on Iraq, remains a work in progress. Their money situation is better than usual. But after considerable talk about the last M, during the 2004 election, Democrats are only belatedly returning to mobilization. "You can advertise and persuade all you want," House minority leader Nancy Pelosi told a group of reporters in May. "But if you don't turn out the vote, you're just having a conversation." In decades past the big city machines and powerful labor unions, aligned with the Democratic Party, pummeled Republicans at GOTV. But Democrats grew complacent, and Republicans aggressively organized locally.

In the 2002 mid-term elections, Karl Rove blindsided Democrats with an impeccably planned turnout blitz known as the 72-Hour Plan, rapidly expanding the Republican vote in fast-growing suburbs in states like Georgia and driving up GOP turnout in rural areas Democrats didn't even know existed. In 2004 Rove expanded the plan and borrowed Amway's famous volunteer-based organizing model, using churches, gun clubs and other local groups. By February 2004 the RNC knew precisely how many volunteers they needed on the ground in Ohio, where they would be and what they'd be doing. The Democrats didn't even begin organizing in key swing states like Florida until after the Democratic convention in July. Democrats were so weak locally in battlegrounds like Ohio, they had to outsource their ground game to the new 527 groups like ACT.

After running one of the most impressive grassroots campaigns in recent memory, Howard Dean was elected DNC chair in 2005, promising to make the party competitive again in every state. It sounded simple, but the "50 State Strategy" was a radical idea for a party accustomed to organizing only around election time, in toss-up states. Dean delivered immediately, giving each state a minimum of two to three field organizers. In places like Mississippi, that was more staff than the party had previously employed altogether. "I'm basically trying to rebuild the infrastructure of a party that doesn't have any," Dean says. With a few exceptions, state DNC chairs rave about him. "I couldn't be more impressed by the DNC," says Chris Redfern, chair of the Ohio Democratic Party. "We're way ahead of the curve," says Dan Parker, Indiana's Democratic chair.

But the 50 State Strategy faced resistance from some key party operatives, who worried that Dean's spending on the states would sap resources needed for the '06 election. Fiery Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee (DCCC) chair Rahm Emanuel directed an expletive-filled tirade at Dean in May, demanding more money for TV ads and wanting the DNC to take the lead on GOTV so he wouldn't have to. "We need the DNC on the field in this election," Emanuel later told the *Washington Post*. (Spokespersons at the DCCC and Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee [DSCC] declined to comment for this article.)

"There's frustration inside the Beltway because I want to do things differently," Dean says. "But if we don't do things differently we'll be extinct as a party." Dean stressed that while

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Emanuel and the DSCC's Chuck Schumer must focus on '06, he's planning long-term. Dean's grassroots supporters say Emanuel and Schumer never respected Dean in the first place. But like it or not, Dean will be judged on how the party performs in this mid-term election.

Party leaders like Emanuel worry that the DNC's effort will be too little, too late—and wonder whether Democrats are doing enough to win the game on the ground. "I think Dean has a plan to rebuild the party in red states," says one labor leader. "I'm not sure that's a plan for '06." As Karl Rove himself said before the '02 elections, "A massive effort to turn out voters is not a casual undertaking and can't be thrown together at the last moment."

The DNC's McMahon says the short-term GOTV plan is already being executed and will be "refined" throughout the summer. The DNC points to what it has done already. On April 29 Democrats knocked on 1 million doors as part of a nationwide door-to-door canvass, the first test of their 50 State Strategy and new field organizers. Similar GOTV activities are planned for July 29 (100 days before election day) and September. Meanwhile, the new field staffers have already made an impact in long-neglected states like Indiana, which has three competitive Congressional elections this cycle.

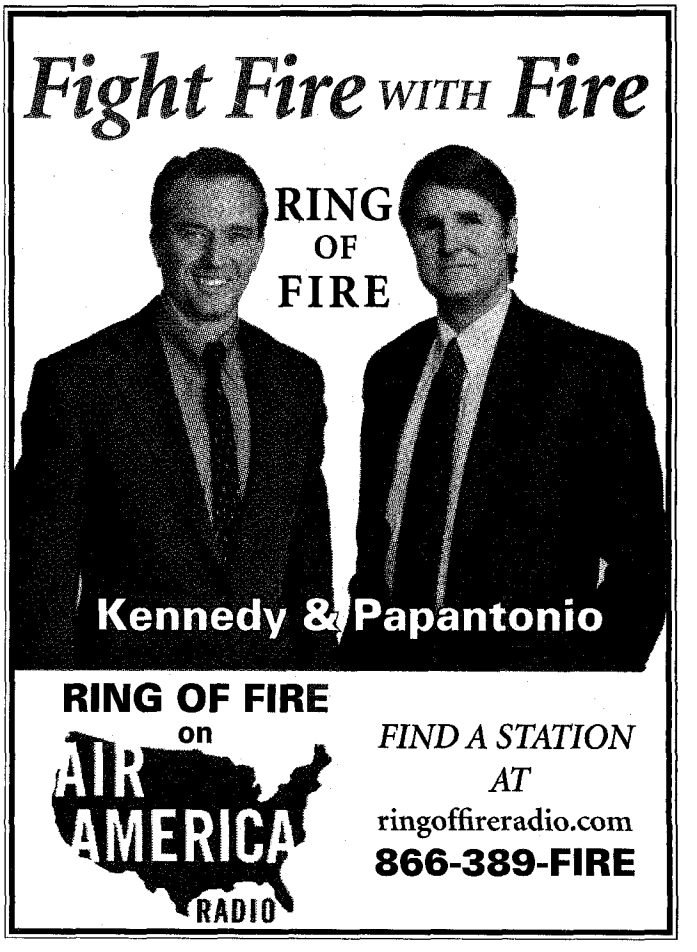
But whatever short-term plan the DNC has for GOTV, leaders in labor, the progressive community and the House and Senate working on '06 strategy have yet to see it, prompting fears that Democrats are once again lagging behind the other side. "By now, groups like labor should be seeing late drafts of a significant number of plans," says one Democratic operative who's worked closely with the DNC. That means helping state parties and campaigns target voters by phone, mail and in person; recruiting local volunteers; organizing events and rallies; and planning for the election day turnout blitz. In coordination with the local campaigns, state parties should be submitting GOTV blueprints for national approval. "I'm not convinced the DNC has any plan come November," says Randy Button, former Democratic chair in Tennessee, where Harold Ford Jr. is trying to became the first black senator elected from the South since Reconstruction.

If and when the DNC produces a short-term plan that party counterparts see, there are concerns from House and Senate strategists that it will be unable to fund it. Democrats are currently doing better than average in the money war. The DCCC and DSCC are ahead of Republicans in fundraising, for the first time in recent memory. In six of the ten most competitive House races with no incumbent, Democratic candidates have more money than their Republican challengers.

But the DNC and the state parties lag behind their GOP rivals. Dean did keep pace with DNC fundraising in '04, but he has been on a spending spree, pouring millions into updating voter technology and boosting state party organizations. As a result the RNC, as of May, has four times as much cash to spend on November as the DNC—$43 million to $10.3 million. This has caused Democrats to fear that Republicans can fund last-minute ad campaigns and turnout efforts that Democrats will be unable to counter. And Republican state parties boast a financial advantage in thirty-two states. "Voters start paying attention late in the game," says the Democratic operative. "That's when you need resources. And there's a worry those resources won't be there." Button, who is coordinating the campaigns in Tennessee, agrees. "I asked Dean point blank a month ago: How much money can I count on you for? He said they've done all they're gonna do."

Dean believes such criticism is much ado about nothing. "We're going to put a lot of money into House and Senate races," Dean said at a recent fundraiser. "More than has ever been put into a nonpresidential year." On the morning of Busby's election in California, Dean was meeting to decide which House and Senate races to invest in. The DNC typically looks to pour money into contests where they can get the most bang for the buck. As of late June, the list was still being finalized.

No matter what the party does, left-leaning groups aligned with the Democrats seem equipped to pick up some of the slack. Even with the loss of ACT, the progressive groups remain active—and they're preparing for '06. Labor plans to spend more money than in any off-year election, targeting millions of its members at the door, on the phone and at work in key battleground states. EMILY's List will add $45 million, courting 2.5 million prochoice women in eight swing states. MoveOn.org's 3 million members will make GOTV phone calls in fifteen to twenty competitive House districts. The Sierra Club is courting environmentally conscious voters in the exurbs of key swing cities like Philadelphia, Columbus and Cincinnati. And the coalition that holds roughly thirty of these groups together, America Votes, has grown from a staff of five to eighty



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and from a budget of $2 million to $13 million, with offices in nine battleground states.

An organized progressive movement, however, is no substitute for a strong Democratic Party. "People in DC need to understand that the ground game has to be a permanent game," Dean says. "That's why the Republicans are so good at it." A centralized, top-down Republican Party in 2004 out-organized a Democratic operation with many moving parts. Officials at the DNC talk about stealing the Republican playbook. But in reality Dean is performing a difficult juggling act, devolving power to the states while trying to win respect for his long-term vision inside the Beltway. "The number-one sport in Washington is to take shots at the DNC chair," the Democratic operative jokes.

Dean's 50 State Strategy could be the blueprint for his party's revival. But winning elections—particularly this November—would help, too. ■

ON THE EVE OF THE ELECTION, MILITANT UNIONS DUKE IT OUT WITH THE RULING CLASS.

Mexico's Labor Rebels

DAVID BACON

he beneficiaries of Mexico's privatization gold rush are worried.

With the election approaching and popular discontent at record levels, President Vicente Fox, a former Coca-Cola executive, has tried to reassure his wealthy supporters that his economic reforms would continue protecting them. These patrons include the Villareal family, whose Grupo Villacero owns the huge Sicartsa steel mill in Lázaro Cárdenas, Michoacán. (The plant was given to them in 1991 by former President Carlos Salinas for a tenth of its real value, making them instant billionaires.) And the Larreas, who got Mexico's two great copper mines, making their Grupo Mexico one of the world's largest mining companies.

JANNA BROWER

Mexico's superrich aren't the only ones with a lot to lose. In mid-June, reports surfaced in the press of a plan by the Ford Motor Company, already one of Mexico's largest employers, to invest $9.2 billion more, while moving to close fourteen North American plants and lay off tens of thousands of US workers.

But if it's up to the unions in Mexican mines and mills, the conservative wave of the past decade will soon be history. In April steel workers stopped work at Sicartsa, and they have occupied it since then in a *plantón*, or tent city. Although Michoacán's left-wing governor refrained from sending troops to dislodge them, local police beholden to the Villareals made an unsuccessful try on April 20, shooting and killing two workers. Meanwhile, miners belonging to the same union in Sonora have shut down Grupo Mexico's two copper mines, one of them for three months.

Insuring the continuation of a favorable investment climate requires control of an increasingly restive workforce, and the old methods no longer work. Mexican employers themselves are discarding the social contract, in which unions had a place at the table so long as they didn't upset it. Now corporations like Grupo Mexico and Grupo Villacero want no unions at all.

Napoleón Gómez Urrutia, head of the National Union of Mine, Metalurgical and Allied Workers of Mexico, says, "They think we're like a cancer and should be exterminated. This is no longer a country that can be called a democracy." Gómez Urrutia is one of the main reasons Fox and his corporate friends look at labor with new eyes. Gómez Urrutia's father was head of the miners' union before him, a corporatist leader in the old style, with a reputation for cooperation. Gómez Urrutia is different.

Fox pushed hard to weaken the country's labor protections at the behest of the World Bank. Mexican labor law gives workers more rights than US law, which Fox seeks to emulate. In a Mexican strike all work must stop and strikebreaking is illegal. Mexican law gives workers the right to healthcare and housing, protects job security, mandates strict hours of work and imposes severance pay for laid-off employees. Gómez Urrutia helped bring even conservative unions into a coalition that spiked Fox's proposals to gut those rights.

Fox liked it even less when the miners' union helped kill his proposal to tax workers' benefits. But all hell broke loose when sixty-five miners died February 19 in a huge explosion in the Pasta de Conchos coal mine in the northern state of Coahuila.

The union found that workers on the second shift had complained of high concentrations of explosive methane gas in the shafts the evening before the accident. "They told us that welding was still going on, even after the failure of some electrical equipment," Gómez Urrutia charges. At 2:20 AM, after the start of the third shift, the gas ignited in a huge fireball.

Of the sixty-five killed, forty didn't work directly for Grupo Mexico, the mine's owner. Instead, they were employed by the network of small private contractors who supply personnel to large industrial employers throughout Mexico. One of those subcontracted employees, Gómez Urrutia says, quit three days before the accident, after being required to weld while there were high concentrations of methane. "He said his supervisor told him, If you don't like it, leave."

A union worker can refuse to work in such conditions, and a labor-management safety committee will back him or her. But contract workers have no union or safety committee. Unions say employers push them harder to take more risks, and pay

David Bacon is the author of The Children of NAFTA *(California) and the forthcoming* Communities Without Borders *(Cornell).*

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them less. At Pasta de Conchos, subcontracted coal miners were getting 90 pesos a day (about $9) for working ten to twelve hours, well beyond the legal eight-hour limit.

Two days after the explosion, Gomez Urrutia accused the Secretary of Labor and Grupo Mexico of "industrial homicide." Less than a week later, corruption charges were filed against him, and Labor Secretary Francisco Xavier Salazar Sáenz, with support from Grupo Villacero and Grupo Mexico, appointed an expelled leader to replace him. Salazar owns two companies that supply chemicals to Grupo Mexico's zinc refinery in San Luis Potosí.

ontract employment is a new phenomenon in Mexico, a product of privatization. When the Cananea and Nacozari copper mines and the Sicartsa mill belonged to the government, all workers became permanent employees after a probation period. But when Sicartsa was sold to the Villareals, they put half the workforce on eighty-nine-day contracts. Mexican law stipulates that workers receive labor protections after ninety days.

Rank-and-file miners and teachers have been willing to face repression to defend their leaders who demand a change in direction.

When Gómez Urrutia was elected union general secretary in 2001, he began pushing back hard. Taking advantage of record copper prices, he won 7 to 9 percent wage increases, twice those dictated by government austerity policies. He forced open the doors of the elite Technological Institute of Monterrey, where 700 workers and their children now study. He won better housing. So when Labor Secretary Salazar tried to replace him, workers re-elected him twice and struck the Nacozari pit and the Sicartsa mill. When work stopped at Cananea, on the 100th anniversary of the uprising there that started the Mexican Revolution, miners announced they wouldn't resume work until Gómez Urrutia was reinstated.

Most Mexican unions say the charges against Gómez Urrutia are bogus and have organized huge demonstrations to protest, knowing that the government has done the same to other unions that challenged its policies. Francisco Hernández Juárez, head of the National Union of Workers, threatened a general strike June 28 if Gómez Urrutia was not reinstated.

In the meantime, however, Gómez Urrutia and his family fled Mexico. Interviewed by phone in a secret location in Canada, he said he and his wife had received many death threats. Leaders of the United Steel Workers, which represents US copper miners, had urged him to leave Mexico until his safety could be guaranteed. The two unions formed a strategic alliance last year, but their ties go back much further. Copper miners on both sides of the border come from the same families. In the cold war era, the left-wing Mine Mill union, now part of USW, supported Mexican copper strikes. That tradition was renewed in 1998, when union caravans from Arizona brought food and help to Cananea, where workers were striking against the Larreas over workforce cuts.

"Grupo Mexico now owns mines on the US side, so we're facing the same employers," explains Gerry Fernandez, USW international director. "We're directly affected by the Mexican government's attack on the *mineros*, and we're going to defend them."

he miners aren't Mexico's only labor rebels. Oaxaca's education workers were occupying the central square of their state capital for three weeks when they too were attacked. On June 14 at four in the morning, helicopters bombarded sleeping teachers and their children with tear-gas shells, and then hundreds of police charged into their tents. Within minutes, scores had been beaten. What had been a protest over wages was transformed into a movement to throw out Governor Ulises Ruiz and end his administration's long history of human rights violations.

Ruiz belongs to Mexico's old governing party, the Institutional Revolutionary Party, while Fox heads the right-wing National Action Party. But both parties support the "reforms" that created Mexico's new billionaires. Three days before the Oaxaca confrontation, Ruiz promised the state's business owners that he would use the *mano dura*—heavy hand—to put down protest.

As they head for the polls, Mexicans face a clear choice. Images of violence on national TV from Oaxaca and Michoacán dovetail with corporate-funded commercials for Fox's would-be successor, Felipe Calderón, predicting chaos if Mexico changes direction.

But while Fox was trying to seize control of the miners, Andrés Manuel López Obrador, candidate of the left-wing Party of the Democratic Revolution, outlined his labor policy on a campaign swing through Sonora, where miners are striking Cananea and Nacozari. "We will promote respect for union democracy," he told reporters. "And there will be no intervention in the life of the unions. Workers can freely elect their own leaders."

Mexico has traveled so far down the road of neoliberal transformation that union democracy alone cannot reverse its course. But the ability of workers to control their unions is the key to electing leaders willing to challenge corporations and the government policies protecting them. Despite their weakened state, unions are still a powerful force. And rank-and-file miners and teachers have been willing to face repression and violence to defend their leaders who demand a change in direction.

Regardless of who is elected July 2, this movement for change will continue. Echoing Steinbeck's Tom Joad, Cananea miners leader Francisco Hernández told Reuters, "Wherever there is a miner, there is a person fighting for labor rights and social justice." And in Oaxaca, on the day after the bloody confrontation, more than 300,000 people marched through the city to defend their embattled teachers. ■

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(Continued From Page 8)

Americans knew nothing of the WTO, the maquiladora, the School of the Americas or even the ozone layer. Our collective ignorance, though disheartening, smacked of opportunity. It provided young activists with a simple, three-step road map to productive social engagement: Uncover, educate and mobilize. Remember watching Kathie Lee Gifford weep saccharine tears on national TV upon the revelation that her Wal-Mart clothing line was made by child laborers in Honduras? Continuing a long tradition of muckraking, young rabble-rousers helped shine the public spotlight on all sorts of hidden injustices. But the post-9/11 landscape changed all that. Now that the Bush Administration has seized its radicalism and thrown all apologies to the wind, most Americans are no longer surprised to hear that our government is busy with the dirty tasks of empire-building: Dropping bombs. Tapping phones. Drilling reserves. Building jails. What role does this unabashed approach to US hegemony leave for student activists who might once have grabbed a bullhorn and, in a moment of youthful courage or foolhardiness, shouted before a massive crowd of silent followers: "Wait a minute! The emperor has no clothes!"

As students of the post-9/11 generation trying to live up to the legacy of our parents' radicalism, we face an emperor who is not only naked but is proudly tipping his cowboy hat in the direction of Abu Ghraib and smirking, "And don't I look sexy?" Within a post-denial Administration, scandal refutation has been replaced by scandal saturation. The result mirrors a neurological phenomenon known as "impaired response habituation," whereby the basal region of the brain makes it difficult for highly repetitive stimulus to penetrate our consciousness. Can you blame America's youth movement for not knowing how to begin?

This, of course, is where our corpus callosum might come in handy. We must begin rebuilding the intricate connections between our collective left brain (where we house our analytical critique of twenty-first-century woes) and our collective right brain (where we harbor our dreams that another world is possible). Already, young people are building this cross-hemisphere bridge—performing guerrilla theater, conducting counter-recruiting workshops, creating community-policing initiatives, writing feminist blogs and building transnational ties with youth activists around the world. Before long, we will hit our stride with Project Corpus Callosum: a much-needed mission to restore the space within our collective conscience where our radical imaginations meet our commitment to everyday action.

SARAH STILLMAN

Sarah Stillman, a senior at Yale University who is double majoring in anthropology and ethnicity, race and migration, has worked abroad with grassroots antisweatshop organizers. She is also the founding editor of Manifesta, *a biannual feminist journal, and co-head of the Student Legal Action Movement.*

LETTERS
CONTINUED

(Continued From Page 2)

or knowledge for who we are, what we have to say and who was on that bus with Cindy when she left our convention in Dallas for Crawford. Don't swiftboat us!

HAL MUSKAT

Nashville

■ As a Vietnam-era veteran and 2005 VFP convention delegate from Nashville, I met and listened to Cindy Sheehan and was deeply moved by her life story and "Call to Crawford." My only "reluctance," probably for the majority of those in attendance, was that I (we) could not be at two places at one time! We not only morally applauded our fellow delegates joining Cindy "in the trenches" at Crawford but provided funds for our VFPers to take our Impeach Bush campaign on the road with Cindy to Crawford. I stayed at the convention, but I later made a "save our soldiers, save our democracy" pilgrimage to Crawford. There with me were two brothers-in-arms: a WWII soldier wounded at Bastogne and a Vietnam vet who is now a minister. We took turns waving Old Glory under the Texas sky and stood a solemn vigil to honor all the Casey Sheehans of this "pre-emptive" war and to protest Bush's illegal and immoral war on the Iraqi people and the US Constitution.

GARY VAUGHAN

HOUPPERT REPLIES

Brooklyn, NY

■ Several sources I spoke to described some heated debate at the 2005 Vets for Peace conference over whether to trek to Crawford in support of Sheehan's protest or whether to focus participants' energies on something closer to home for the annual conference-related day of protest. Perhaps this was just the healthy tug-of-war democratic organizations engage in when gambling on how best to allocate limited resources and manpower. In any case, I certainly never intended to imply that Veterans for Peace is a reluctant supporter of Sheehan today—or vice versa.

KAREN HOUPPERT

EXTREMIST MUSLIMS IN AFRICA

Amherst, NY

■ Fatin Abbas's review of Wole Soyinka's latest memoir in your Spring Books Issue is very informative ["Dining With Devils," May 29]. But like most progressives, she seems to have a disturbingly benign view of Islam. Soyinka is hardly alone in his criticism of Arabs and Islam. Nor is he alone in his criticism of Ali Mazrui and his public television series *The Africans*: Many intellectuals and scholars share Soyinka's views on Arabs, Muslims and the TV series.

While it is certainly debatable whether "Islamic civilization was as devastating to Africa as Western colonization," there should be no denying that extremist Muslims have wrought much damage on Africa and the collective psyche of its people. Do *Nation* readers really need to be reminded of the horrors occurring in Sudan? One could also look at Soyinka's native Nigeria and see the horrific results of Sharia law in numerous Nigerian states. Thousands of Nigerians have been killed over the past few years as a result of religious violence, usually, though not always, initiated by fanatical Muslims. In Somalia, Muslims are spreading terror throughout that troubled land.

Militant Muslims have destroyed numerous African shrines, churches and non-Muslim objects of worship throughout the continent. In Senegal, Sudan and other African nations, many black Muslims identify more closely with Arabic culture than with indigenous African culture. It is time progressives abandoned the notion that Islam is benign. Those Africans, and people in many other parts of the world who are victimized by Islamists, do not have the luxury of ignoring the fanatics who are making their lives a hell on earth.

NORM R. ALLEN JR.
Deputy editor, Free Inquiry *magazine*

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BOOKS & THE ARTS

The American Political Tradition

ANDREW J. BACEVICH

THE GOOD FIGHT: Why Liberals—and Only Liberals—Can Win the War on Terror and Make America Great Again.
By Peter Beinart.
HarperCollins. 288 pp. $25.95.

OVERTHROW: America's Century of Regime Change From Hawaii to Iraq.
By Stephen Kinzer.
Times. 384 pp. $27.50.

When it comes to foreign policy, the fundamental divide in American politics today is not between left and right but between those who subscribe to the myth of the "American Century" and those who do not. Peter Beinart is a true believer. In his eyes America's purpose today remains precisely what it has always been: to confront and destroy the enemies of freedom at home and abroad. In *The Good Fight*, he summons liberals to recover their crusading spirit and to "put anti-totalitarianism at the center of their hopes for a better country and a better world." Liberalism must become once again what it was in its heyday: "a fighting faith."

A fighting faith requires "a narrative of national greatness." To win elections, good ideas and qualified candidates won't suffice. "Liberals can churn out policy papers and nominate war heroes," Beinart writes, "but without their own narrative of American greatness, it will do them little good, either in gaining power or in wielding it." Here, according to Beinart, lies the genius of Republicans, whether in the era of Ronald Reagan or in the age of George W. Bush: "They have a usable past." Celebrating American virtue and righteousness plays well at the polls. To compete effectively Democrats will have to invent their own uplifting version of history—"invent" being the operative term, since for Beinart facts as such are incidental to the process. "Empiricism," he suggests, "is no match for a narrative of the present based on a memory of the past."

The remembering that transforms the past into parable is necessarily selective. Indeed, what you leave out is as important as what you include. This is where Beinart takes present-day liberals to task. Ever since the 1960s they have shown a penchant for getting history backward, forgetting what matters (like standing up to Hitler and Stalin) and obsessing about what ought to be forgotten (like Vietnam). "Before today's progressives can conquer their ideological weakness," he writes, "they must conquer their ideological amnesia. What they need to remember, above all, is the cold war." In short, today's liberals ought to take their cues from the hawkish Democrats of yesteryear who led the epic battle against Communism. That struggle defined the second half of the twentieth century; with totalitarianism now having reconstituted itself in the guise of "jihadist terrorism," the struggle continues and, as Beinart sees it, promises to define the twenty-first century as well.

To compete with Republicans, Beinart writes, liberals must invent a new version of history—'invent' being the key term.

Beinart devotes much of *The Good Fight* to constructing this narrative of an anti-totalitarian crusade running from World War II to the present. In his telling of the tale, as long as steely liberals like Harry Truman and John F. Kennedy were at the helm, heeding the counsel of tough-minded liberal intellectuals like Reinhold Niebuhr and Arthur Schlesinger Jr., the crusade proceeded swimmingly. When liberals lost their nerve, however, and conservatives came to power, things went awry.

Sustaining this thesis requires an extraordinary combination of omissions and contortions on Beinart's part. Readers will learn, for example, that Kennedy was a visionary statesman who instituted the

Andrew J. Bacevich is professor of history and international relations at Boston University. His most recent book is The New American Militarism: How Americans Are Seduced by War.

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Alliance for Progress and created the Peace Corps. They won't learn anything about the Bay of Pigs, Operation Mongoose or US complicity in the assassination of Ngo Dinh Diem. Nor will they get any assessment of what Kennedy's ostensibly progressive foreign policy initiatives actually accomplished. (Answer: not much.)

Readers will learn further about the unfortunate tendency of conservatives—in contrast to sophisticated, worldly liberals—to see things in terms of black and white. Beinart offers up John Foster Dulles, who "painted the cold war as a quasi-religious struggle between good and evil," as a prime offender. Yet he ignores a mountain of evidence, starting with the Truman Administration's NSC-68, suggesting that liberals were equally susceptible to manichean—indeed, apocalyptic—views. As for Dulles, Beinart rather conveniently overlooks the fact that the very pragmatic Dwight Eisenhower kept his Secretary of State on a short leash. Dulles preached good and evil; more often than not, Ike discounted the preaching and opted for prudence.

According to the Republican version of the American Century, Ronald Reagan all but single-handedly brought about the collapse of Communism. Not so, insists Beinart. Just as liberals framed the cold war in the 1940s, so too they saved the day in the 1980s by preventing reckless right-wingers from abandoning that frame. Credit for turning back the forces of totalitarianism in Central America goes to those hardheaded liberal Democrats in Congress who repaired the flaws in the Reagan Doctrine, thereby subverting the Sandinista regime in Nicaragua and keeping El Salvador from slipping into the Communist orbit.

This imaginative, if largely spurious, depiction of postwar history serves Beinart's larger purpose in two ways. First, by revalidating antitotalitarianism as the era's overarching theme, Beinart promotes it as the idea that ought to define US policy in the aftermath of 9/11 as well. Second, by portraying hawkish liberals as heroes, doves as fools and conservatives as knaves, he suggests that restoring the fortunes of today's Democratic Party ought to be a piece of cake: All liberals need to do is to reject the wimpy anti-imperialism of Howard Dean and Michael Moore and embrace the muscular principles that inspired the Americans for Democratic Action back in the late 1940s.

To legitimate this fraud and to wrap anti-totalitarian liberalism in a mantle of moral superiority, Beinart shanghais Reinhold Niebuhr and subjects the great Protestant theologian to ritual abuse. In essence, he uses Niebuhr much as Jerry Falwell uses Jesus Christ, and just as shamelessly: citing him as an unimpeachable authority and claiming his endorsement, thereby preempting any further discussion.

To establish his Niebuhrean credentials, Beinart sprinkles *The Good Fight* with references to "guilt," "moral fallibility" and "limits." Yet whereas the real Niebuhr's message was a cautionary one, Beinart-channeling-Niebuhr emits portentous exhortations. Like a third-rate stump speech, the results don't necessarily parse, but they do manage to sound awfully important. Thus Beinart lets it be known that "only when America recognizes that it is not inherently good can it become great." Then there's this chin stroker: "America must shed its moral innocence to act meaningfully in the world." Or better still: "America's challenge lies not in recognizing our moral superiority, but in demonstrating it."

The real Niebuhr worried less about Americans demonstrating their moral superiority than about whether they would forgo temptations of moral irresponsibility. But then, the real Niebuhr did not conceive of history as a narrative of national greatness. Rather than bend the past to suit a particular agenda, liberal or otherwise, he viewed it as beyond our understanding and fraught with paradox. "The whole drama of history," he wrote, "is enacted in a frame of meaning too large for human comprehension or management."

No such humility constrains Beinart. He not only comprehends history but insists with all the fervor of William Kristol that the United States has the capacity and duty to manage it. After all, when the first phase of the American Century ended in 1989, it rendered a definitive verdict: "The core reality was that the United States had vanquished its chief ideological competitor and military rival, leaving it in a position of astonishing strength." Victory in the cold war imposed obligations; Americans were called upon to use that strength to carry on the work of liberating humankind. Today, when in Beinart's estimate "U.S. military and economic influence knows few bounds," he believes it is incumbent upon policy-makers to redouble American efforts to spread the blessings of freedom and equality across the Muslim world.

Writing in the early days of the cold war, Niebuhr had urged "a sense of modesty about the virtue, wisdom, and power available to us for the resolution of [history's] perplexities." Were he in our midst today, he would likely align himself with those dissidents on the left and the right who reject the conceits of the American Century and who view as profoundly dangerous the claims of both neoliberals and neoconservatives to understand history's purpose and destination. The beginning of wisdom, Niebuhr counseled, lies in recognizing that history cannot be coerced.

Beinart is by no means alone in believing otherwise. Generations of American statesmen have pushed and prodded history this way and that. Stephen Kinzer's *Overthrow* surveys some of the results of their handiwork.

Unlike Beinart, Kinzer does not buy into the myth of an American Century in which the forces of freedom fought those of totalitarianism. His alternative version of that century, running from the 1890s to the present day, recounts the generally sorry record of US efforts to subvert and overthrow foreign governments that failed to meet with American approval. His new book catalogues fourteen such episodes, beginning with the "revolution" concocted by wealthy American planters in 1893 to depose Hawaii's Queen Liliuokalani and culminating with George W. Bush's invasion of Iraq 110 years later.

A longtime foreign correspondent with the *New York Times*, Kinzer does not provide a lot that's new. Relying on secondary sources, *Overthrow* recycles and repackages material that will be familiar to the historically literate. But by collecting these stories in a single volume, Kinzer performs a useful service. *Overthrow* makes it abundantly clear that far from being some innovation devised in the aftermath of 9/11, "regime change" has long been a mainstay of American statecraft.

When targeting some offending potentate for retirement, Kinzer notes, Washington has seldom if ever acted for altruistic reasons. "Every time the United States has set out to overthrow a foreign government, its leaders have insisted that they are acting not to expand American power but to help people who are suffering." In reality, however, the suffering of the oppressed has never figured as more than an afterthought. "What distinguishes Americans from citizens of past empires," writes Kinzer, "is their eagerness to persuade themselves that they are acting out of humanitarian motives." But Kinzer recognizes this as poppycock; like any great power, the United States has set its policy according to self-interest. Whether in Latin America, the Asia-Pacific or the Persian Gulf, the United States has seen regime change as a means for improving economic access, shoring up political stability and enhancing American control.

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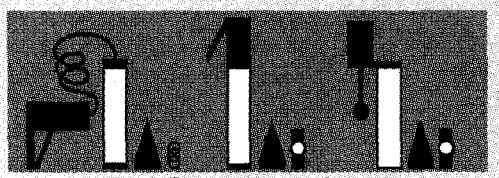

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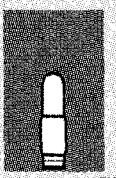

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Kinzer is especially good at tallying up what he calls the "terrible unintended consequences" that frequently ensue when the United States overthrows a government that has fallen out of Washington's favor. Bush's removal of Saddam Hussein is by no means the first such enterprise to produce something other than the tidy outcome envisioned by its architects. A couple of decades of mucking around in Nicaragua yielded the dictator Anastasio Somoza Debayle. US promotion of the 1953 coup to remove Mohammed Mossadegh, Iran's nationalist prime minister, fueled anti-American resentment that eventually found expression in the 1979 Islamic Revolution. The pursuit of Fidel Castro in 1961 paved the way for the missile crisis a year later. The toppling of South Vietnam's President Ngo Dinh Diem in 1963 gave rise to chaos. And so it has gone.

Most instructive of all, however, are the ironic consequences stemming from America's success in ousting the Soviets from Afghanistan. In retrospect, the results of regime change there serve as a sort of cosmic affirmation of Niebuhr's entire worldview. Of Afghanistan in the years following the Soviet withdrawal, truly it can be said, as Niebuhr wrote, "The paths of progress...proved to be more devious and unpredictable than the putative managers of history could understand."

Those, like Peter Beinart, who are gung-ho to wage their war against jihadist terror dare not contemplate present-day Afghanistan too deeply. Their depiction of the war as a contest that pits freedom against totalitarianism becomes plausible only if they ignore the actual history giving rise to the conflict. Much of that history occurred in the period enshrined as the American Century, but precious little of it had anything to do with promoting freedom. As experienced by Muslims, the American Century was marked by imperialism and intervention, manipulation and betrayal, Israel and oil. It goes without saying that in Beinart's account none of these matters qualify as relevant.

The Good Fight began life as an essay that appeared in *The New Republic* when Beinart edited that magazine. According to press reports, he received a handsome $600,000 advance to expand his essay into a book. The result can only be called a major disappointment: *The Good Fight* is insipid, pretentious and poorly written. At points it verges on incoherence. As history, it is meretricious. As policy prescription, it is wrongheaded. Beinart has perpetrated his fraud twice over. ■

Shadows

DARRYL PINCKNEY

IN SEARCH OF NELLA LARSEN: A Biography of the Color Line.
By George Hutchinson. Belknap. 611 pp. $39.95.

For a long time Nella Larsen was the mystery woman of the Harlem Renaissance. In the late 1920s she published two sophisticated novels, *Quicksand* and *Passing*, and then her writing life came to an end. She died in obscurity in 1964. It would be another decade or so before interest in the Harlem Renaissance led to her rediscovery, although her books began coming back into print in the early '70s. Since then, feminist scholars like Mary Helen Washington and Hazel Carby have been as captivated by Larsen as others have been by Zora Neale Hurston. Larsen's work has been reprinted, edited or introduced by Deborah McDowell, Ntozake Shange, Charles Larson (who has also written a critical biography of her) and Thadious Davis, whose 1994 biography *Nella Larsen, Novelist of the Harlem Renaissance: A Woman's Life Unveiled* seemed to give us all we needed to know about this elusive figure. George Hutchinson, however, has produced what must be the definitive biography of Larsen. It's hard to think of a stone he hasn't looked under in his quest to establish the facts, correct mistakes and trace her private life. But Hutchinson's biography also manages to be an insightful reconsideration of a much-studied period in American literature and black cultural history.

Nella Larsen was born Nellie Walker in Chicago in 1891. Her father was black, a laborer from what was then the Danish West Indies. Her mother was white, a domestic worker from Denmark. Her father disappeared from Larsen's life sometime after her birth. Her mother later married a Scandinavian named Peter Larsen, and they had a daughter. Although Nella took her stepfather's name, mixed families had a hard time finding neighborhoods where they were accepted. And as Hutchinson makes clear, Larsen's childhood coincided with the hardening of racial lines in immigrant-filled Chicago. After she left Chicago, her family lived as a white family. Larsen's half-sister never acknowledged her, until she discovered after Larsen's death that she was her only beneficiary. Larsen's upbringing as the resented stepchild, the darker-skinned daughter whose existence perhaps burdened her otherwise loving mother, would inform her fiction about women too dark to be white and too light to be black, about black women living between white and black and culturally not entirely at home anywhere. Hutchinson explains Larsen's ambivalence about her early life, her tendency to shroud her story in mystery, even with her friends:

> Since she was always evasive about the details of her past life, it seems clear that she was ashamed of her lowly origins in the vice district of Chicago, ashamed in a special way, for she dreaded that people would think her the daughter of a white prostitute. Yet, just as important, as a member of a white immigrant family, she had no entrée into the world of the blues or of the black church. If she could never be white like her mother and sister, neither could she ever be black in quite the same way that Langston Hughes and his characters were black. Hers was a netherworld, unrecognizable historically and too painful to dredge up.

Larsen's working-class mother understood that the only way she could provide for her black daughter's future was to give her an education. Larsen had the chance to go to college and escape the class she was born into that her white half-sister didn't. At Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee, in 1907, Larsen found herself among an all-black student body for the first time in her life. Fisk had a white president and board of trustees, but the faculty included black teachers. Women students couldn't leave campus without a chaperone, and there were new rules concerning uniforms for women and what jewelry they could wear. Hutchinson speculates that Larsen was probably expelled a year later for some violation of the dress or conduct code. As a child, Larsen had spent a few years with her mother's relations in Denmark. After leaving Fisk

Darryl Pinckney is the author of a novel, High Cotton, *and a collection of essays,* Out There: Mavericks of Black Literature.

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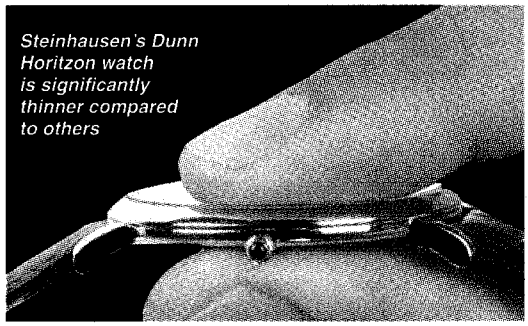

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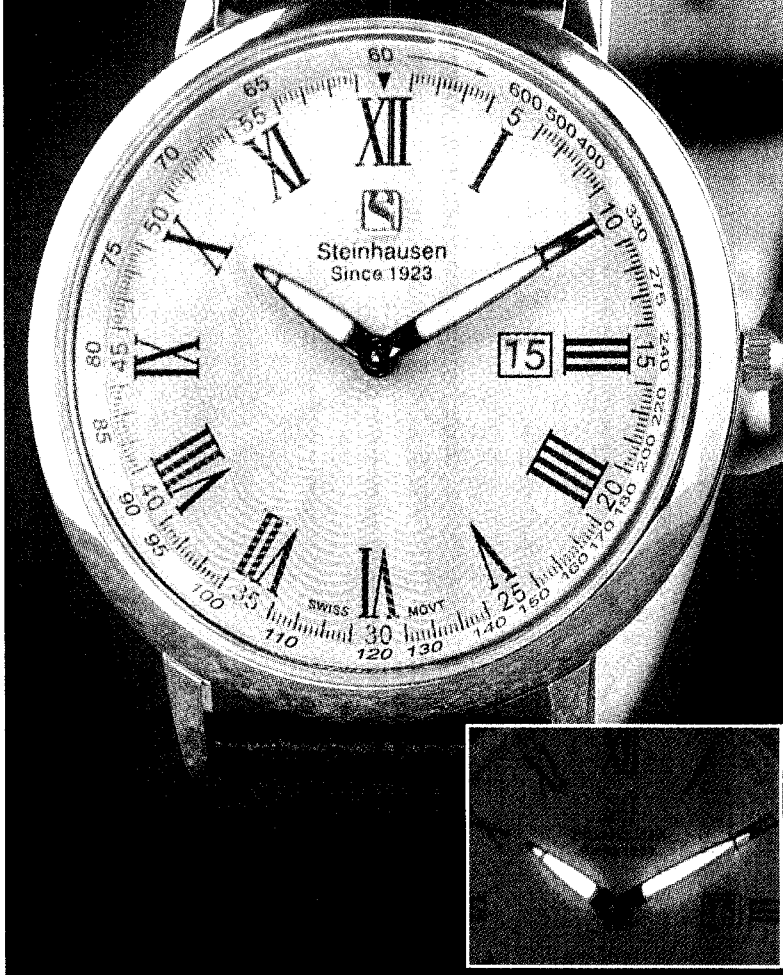

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she returned to Denmark for four years, but Europe was not really the answer to her question of where she belonged.

In 1912 Larsen began training to become a nurse at the Lincoln Hospital and Home in the Bronx, "a nearly all-white hospital patient base, an all-black nursing home, an all-white (and male) staff of physicians, and an all-black (and female) nursing school." No matter what situation Larsen found herself in, racial irony of one kind or another invariably wrapped itself around her. After graduating in 1915, she took a position as head nurse at the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama. Though Tuskegee's hospital was the best in the black South at that time, Hutchinson relates, nursing had very little status as a profession and Tuskegee's student nurses were exploited as a workforce, doing the hospital's cleaning and laundry, and available to white doctors to look after their white patients. Yet Tuskegee was unique among black colleges in being run entirely by blacks. Booker T. Washington, its revered founder, died shortly after Larsen arrived, which no doubt contributed to an atmosphere even stricter than that of Fisk. Institute officials were indifferent to the point of spite when Larsen, exhausted by the poor working conditions, resigned in 1916.

Back in New York, having witnessed the Spanish flu pandemic of 1918–19, Larsen gave up nursing to become a librarian. In 1919 she married Elmer Imes, the "second black Ph.D. in physics in U.S. history." They moved to Harlem and Larsen took a job at the 135th Street branch of the New York Public Library. Its crusading head, a white woman, saw in her an ideal candidate to overcome barriers in the profession, and after gaining a certificate from the Library School of the New York Public Library in 1923, Larsen worked as a children's librarian on the Lower East Side. By virtue of her marriage, she was a member of Harlem's black professional class. She and her husband knew the NAACP leadership: W.E.B. Du Bois, Walter White, James Weldon Johnson. However, because of her low birth and mixed parentage, and because she didn't have a college degree, Larsen was alienated from the life of the black middle class, with its emphasis on school and family ties, its fraternities and sororities. Yet she was well placed to catch the first stirrings of the Negro Awakening: the exhibitions, plays, concerts and books. She drifted away from library work in order to write and in 1926 published her first adult fiction in women's journals devoted to the romantic short story.

Self-conscious among the Talented Tenth and, like Claude McKay, some ten years older than Langston Hughes and his crowd, Larsen was more comfortable in the interracial bohemia exemplified by her close friend Carl Van Vechten, the white writer and photographer whose controversial 1926 novel *Nigger Heaven* she defended to black peers who felt he'd slandered the race by portraying Harlem life as a drunken orgy. It is because Van Vechten was such an indefatigable correspondent and diarist as well as a compulsive partygoer and first-nighter that Hutchinson suddenly has so much information about Larsen's day-to-day activities. Larsen and her black women friends, intelligent, light-skinned and ambitious, were in Greenwich Village as often as they were in Harlem, and Hutchinson—author of *The Harlem Renaissance in Black and White*, a perceptive study of the relationship between black writers and white publishers and editors in the 1920s—is sensitive to social nuance in his portrayal of the Harlem Renaissance as overlapping circles, parallel developments, intersecting interests and competing groups rather than the cohesive movement it tended to become in cultural memory.

BEN PINCHOT/YALE UNIVERSITY. BY PERMISSION OF THE PINCHOT ESTATE.

Nella Larsen, circa 1930

When Larsen wrote her first novel, *Quicksand* (1928), she did not have many models for the mixed-race life in American fiction about "the tragic mulatto." What most influenced how she rendered her tale of a black woman struggling not to be imprisoned by insecure social circumstances was her reading of Henrik Ibsen and Jens Peter Jacobsen, a reflection of her bilingual heritage. Helga, the book's heroine, is the child of a white mother and a black father who deserted them. Helga's mother died when she was 15 and her uncle, who sent her to college, has remarried, but his white family doesn't want her. When Helga quits her job at suffocating Naxos College and gets away from Negro education, she tries "teeming black Harlem," then tolerant, bourgeois Copenhagen, but her soul is restless because of her love for a man from Naxos who marries another woman. It was daring to write about the sexuality of black women, and of single women in the city, but Larsen's message is bleak: that Helga is lost when she finds religion, marries a coarse preacher and returns to Naxos to be overwhelmed by children and drudgery.

In *Passing*, published in 1929, Larsen frees herself from the conventions that had grown up around the theme of the black person who passes for white by telling her story from the point of view of a witness, a black woman who knows another black woman who is passing. Irene Redfield doesn't even much like Clare Kendry, a childhood acquaintance from Chicago who forces her way into Irene's comfortable Harlem scene, though for Clare, a mother who is married to a white racist, to masquerade as a white woman interested in black life is to court exposure. The novel's suspense is not so much in waiting for Clare to be found out but in wondering with Irene what Clare wants. (Critics have also convincingly explored the possibility that the novel is replete with lesbian undercurrents, that what Clare wants is Irene.) When Irene suspects that Clare is having an affair with her husband, she longs for Clare's husband to take her away from Harlem. Clare falls to her death at an uptown party, and though the scene is deliberately ambiguous in Larsen's rendering, Hutchinson argues that Clare is not a suicide, that Irene pushes her.

Larsen's control over her Harlem milieu of polite teas and tense cocktails is superb. She takes surfaces seriously: clothes, décor, the weather, faces. She examines the irresolution and ambivalence of her heroines with precision. Moreover, her fatalism sets her apart from other black women writers of the period. Hutchinson points out that Larsen's success depended in part on a misunderstanding of her work, that because of the class of the blacks she wrote about, she was commended by those who felt that black literature should advance the cause by projecting positive images of blacks as accomplished, decent and therefore worthy of full class citizenship, even though her novels are far from the wearying brightness of Jessie Fauset, another novelist of the black middle class.

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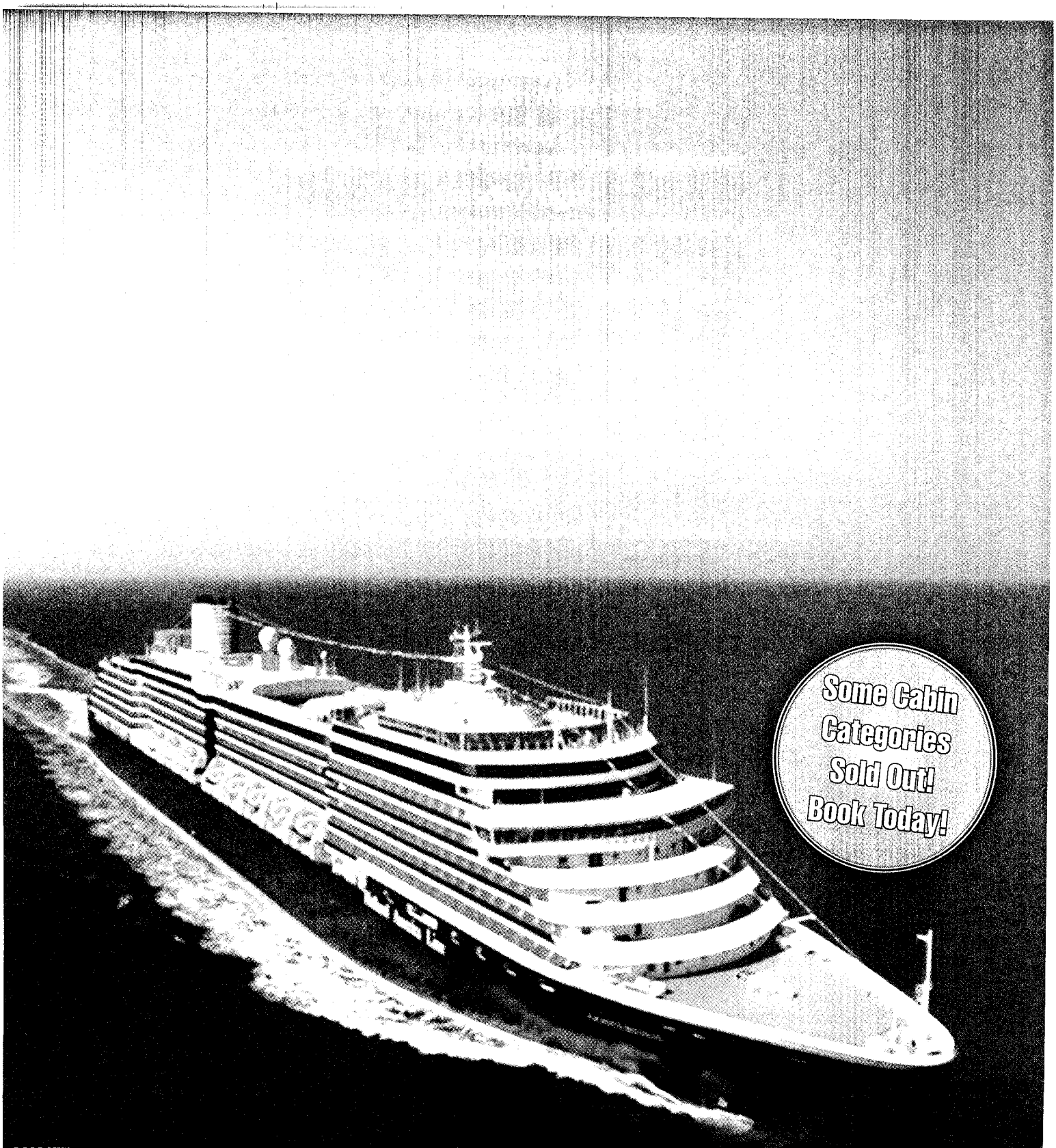

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The same black critics who, from their own snobbery, accepted Larsen's restrained, understated work had attacked the boisterous Van Vechten, with whom Larsen was in deep sympathy concerning the most important artistic matters of the Harlem Renaissance, as Hutchinson makes clear in his moving discussion of their friendship and her growing confidence as a writer.

In 1930 Larsen was involved in a plagiarism scandal about a short story she had published, but it did not keep her from being awarded a Guggenheim fellowship. She went to Europe to avoid the failure of her marriage, and life on Mallorca and then in Paris was one grand social round. By 1933 Larsen was back in New York, divorced, and her novel about a love triangle, using white characters, had been turned down by her publishers. She seems to have stopped trying after a while, but she was not really a casualty of the Depression. Hutchinson charts her sad withdrawal from Harlem Renaissance friends like Van Vechten. Alimony payments ceased when her ex-husband died in 1942, and Larsen returned to nursing. Hutchinson says that having to work pulled her out of what may have been depression or addiction. But she had disappeared from her former life, into the Lower East Side, where she worked. She died in her Second Avenue apartment on Easter Sunday in 1964 but was not found right away. When the police left, most of her possessions had been stolen. Hutchinson's respect for his subject is so great that one feels Nella Larsen can at last be at rest. ■

ART

All About Eva

ARTHUR C. DANTO

In a 1996 interview the sculptor Carl Andre remarked, "Perhaps I am the bones of the body of sculpture, and perhaps Richard Serra is the muscle, but Eva Hesse is the brain and nervous system extending far into the future." Hesse died of a brain tumor in 1970, at the age of 34. I did not know her, but her personality so infuses her art that I have thought of her with a kind of love from the moment I encountered her work. There is a famous photograph of her standing in a polka-dotted dress before a large late work, *Expanded Expansion*, at the opening of the Whitney's controversial 1969 exhibit "Anti-Illusion:Process/Materials." She had arrived at the opening in a wheelchair, just after the first of three operations. *Expanded Expansion* is made of rubberized cheesecloth attached to reinforced fiberglass poles, and it forms a theatrical kind of curtain behind her. It consists of thirteen diaphanous bays, ten feet tall—slightly more than twice the artist's height. At its fullest expansion, the work is thirty feet wide. This tiny, brave woman looks as if she is about to be enfolded in her work.

Like much of Hesse's late work, *Expanded Expansion* was not made for the ages. Hesse was aware that latex is an unstable material, disposed to oxidize and turn brittle, and to discolor with the passage of time. According to her *catalogue raisonné*, she lectured those who sought to discourage her from using it:

> She was very aware that it was temporary. She was not defensive about it; she was offensive about it. She would say that it was an attribute. Everything was for the process—a moment in time, not meant to last.

The fiberglass poles, reinforced by resin, on the other hand, could last indefinitely, and she was touched by the counterpoint between her two favorite materials during that final phase of her brief creative life. There is, moreover, in the contrast in the photograph between the fragile monumentality of the sculpture and the defiant resoluteness of its diminutive author, a further dialogue between what the catalogue describes as "absurdity and exaggeration." I am haunted by the photograph and used it as an illustration in my book *The Abuse of Beauty*. It illuminates the wit and the intelligence that Andre ascribes to Hesse's work through his anatomical metaphor. I would add to these intellectual attributes the poetic eroticism of *Expanded Expansion*, as well as of the contrast between elasticity and rigidity formed by the work's two materials.

All these traits are exemplified in the works that were shown in Hesse's only one-person show of her sculpture, "Chain Polymers" at the Fischbach Gallery on West 57th Street, in November 1968. It is in part reconstituted by the profoundly moving exhibition at the Jewish Museum in New York City until September 17. Given the uncertainty of latex as a material, it is a heroic exhibition. But as curator Elisabeth Sussman writes in her introduction:

> Are the few surviving fragile works best left in storage to protect them from the effects of air and light? What are we to say about exposing the work to the natural process of aging? Is it prudent to show only the more secure work of 1968, the fiberglass pieces? Is it worth the risk to have the artworks travel so that they can be seen together? Allowing all aspects of this great year's work to be seen together while letting the sculptures mature naturally would, one could speculate, most likely reflect the way Hesse herself was thinking about her work. She seems, in fact, to have been incorporating an anticipation of aging and, especially, the unknown into the creation of her art.

Hesse's collectors must be an intrepid group. It had to have taken immense confidence to have bought work so little calculated to endure. Of course, the latex parts of a work could in principle be replaced. It must not be immensely difficult to replace the discolored and disintegrating latex sheeting of a work like *Expanded Expansion* and make it look as good as new. Sooner or later decisions like that will have to be faced. "At this point," Hesse wrote, "I feel a little guilty when people want to buy it. I think they know but I want to write them a letter and say it's not going to last. I am not sure what my stand on lasting really is. Part of me feels that it's superfluous, and if I need to use rubber that is more important. Life doesn't last; art doesn't last."

If Hesse's work is marked—indeed, transformed—by time, so is our perception of it. In part because of our awareness of her own premature death, no one can see the exhibition in the same way as it would have been seen in 1968. That show must have been a moment of triumph for Hesse, who by all accounts was an exceedingly ambitious, fiercely driven person. But one cannot erase from consciousness every-

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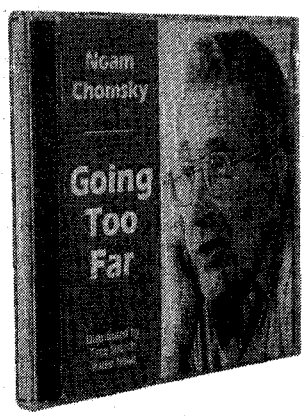

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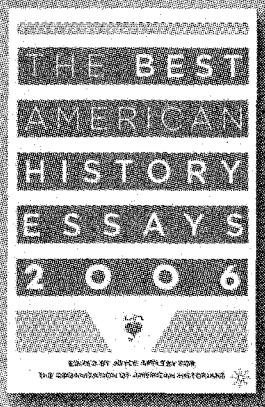

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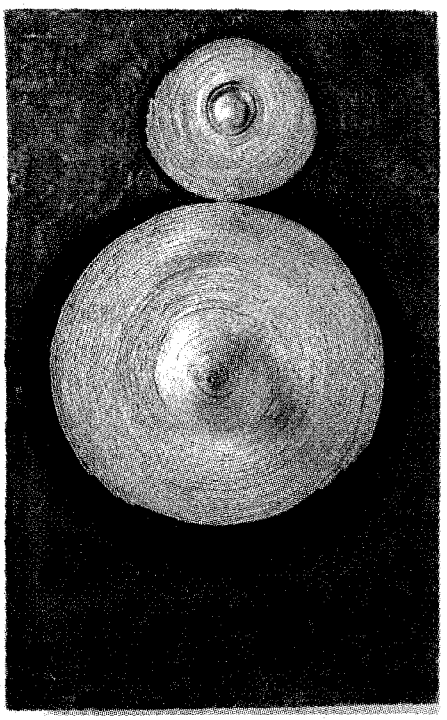
thing that has happened between then and now, including what nobody knew at the time: that she only had two years to live. So the discolorations, the slackness in the membrane-like latex, the palpable aging of the material, inflect the whole experience.

Yet somehow the work does not feel tragic. Instead it is full of life, of eros, even of comedy. In *Schema*, which looks like a tray of chocolate cupcakes laid out to cool, and in *Sequel*, in which what look like cracked spherical nuts have been tumbled on a crumpled latex tablecloth, there is an irrepressible feeling of mirth, so far in spirit from anything being shown by Hesse's contemporaries. Nothing in the entire history of sculpture would have prepared anyone for the array of nineteen irregularly shaped fiberglass and polyester resin buckets without bottoms, each about nineteen inches high, that constitute *Repetition Nineteen III*. Each piece in the show vibrates with originality and mischief. Except with reference to the bakeshop orderliness of *Schema*, most of the sculptures embody the philosophy of "anti-form," meaning they conform to no preestablished order. The components of many of the works are intended to be strewn, scattered or left to chance.

As the title of the 1969 Whitney show suggests, the concept of "anti-form" was much in the air. It communicated a certain resistance to the ideal of mechanical uniformity, emblematized in the concept of the grid or the regular series, as well as to anything connected with geometry, which, since Cubism, had played so prominent a role in the look of Modernism. "Anti-form" captured the idea of resistance to and overcoming of limits that was inherent in 1960s attitudes to boundary lines of any sort. Hesse had participated in an exhibition titled "Eccentric Abstraction" in 1966, where she showed a work that I greatly admire, *Metronomic Irregularity II*, the title of which is conspicuously absurdist, since it would defeat the point to have an irregular metronome. She used cloth-covered wire, which she wove back and forth into a loose sort of web work. This led critics, on the basis of superficial resemblance, to accuse her of attempting to translate Jackson Pollock into sculpture. In fact, Hesse's attitude toward the ideas of Abstract Expressionism was ambiguous, as might be surmised from the title of another show in which she took part in 1966—"Abstract Inflationism and Stuffed Expressionism"—at the Graham Gallery in New York. *Metronomic Irregularity*, of which she made several versions, was in no sense "secondhand" (the charge of her critics) and certainly not an effort to apply to sculpture the effect of action or drip painting. That kind of critical gaffe was probably inevitable, given how some critics depend on their eyes alone when they enter a gallery. Hesse's detractors revealed not only how little they understood the impulses behind her work but how little they knew of the ideas reshaping sculpture in the '60s. The last thing an ambitious sculptor like Hesse would have wanted to do was emulate painting, which was widely considered to have had its day.

Hesse came into her own as a sculptor in the midst of a slump. It was 1965 and she was living with her husband, the sculptor Tom Doyle, in an abandoned factory in the Ruhr, which Doyle had been given as a studio in exchange for art by a German manufacturer and collector. Hesse was deeply unhappy being back in Germany, where she was born in 1936 into a family of observant Jews. Though the family managed to escape to England and ultimately New York, she grew up in an



MOMA/THE ESTATE OF EVA HESSE. HAUSER & WIRTH.

***Ringaround Arosie*, 1965**

atmosphere defined by the Holocaust. Her mother succumbed to depression, abandoned family life and ultimately committed suicide. The father married a woman with no particular interest in children. Hesse's own marriage was pretty rocky. The search for her artistic path was further complicated by the questions women were then beginning to ask about their

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identity, though feminism as a movement had not yet emerged.

Hesse's breakthrough came after Doyle suggested that she use the materials that were lying around the factory. She began to work with cloth-covered cord, which she found in great abundance on the floor. It was an unusual material for sculpture. But, as Doyle put it, "It was the string that got her going." Hesse began to produce a body of work that was entirely her own—a group of relief sculptures in which carefully wound electrical wire was glued around shapes attached to masonite panels and other sorts of surfaces.

The earliest work in the current show was in fact Hesse's first relief sculpture, an impudent pair of breastlike hemispheres of different sizes, one atop the other, each ringed with a red circle and punctuated with a startlingly naturalistic pink nipple. It is called *Ringaround Arosie.* One can easily imagine what a psychotherapist would make of this antic confection, in which industrial leavings are transformed into something that looks like an erotic trophy. But what strikes me is the way adversity is trumped by absurdity. Hesse made fourteen of these marvelously ludic reliefs and, as if to make sure that critics did not make heavy hermeneutic weather of the work, she gave them preposterous titles: *Eighter From Decatur*, *Oomamaboomba*, *C-Clamp Blues*, *Up the Down Road*, *Top Spot*, *Tomorrow's Apples (5 in White)* and the like. There is something utterly uplifting in the way this emotionally needful and fragile young woman coped with emotional chaos by reinventing sculpture through aesthetic insubordination, playing with worthless material amid the industrial ruins of a defeated nation that, only two decades earlier, would have murdered her without a second thought. By the time she returned to America, her marriage was over, but she had found herself as an artist.

Hesse was not included in the Jewish Museum's important 1966 exhibition of contemporary sculpture, "Primary Structures," which assembled a body of austere and reductivist works by the artists who were to define the aesthetic code of what Robert Smithson, one of the participants, called "a new kind of monumentality." It was typically monochromatic, uningratiating, serial, boxy and bland. At the same time, it was felt to be underwritten by the intimidating arcana of mathematical ideas: set theory, symbolic logic, combinatorial algebra, systems analysis or, in Smithson's view, the Second Law of Thermodynamics. It seemed artistically invincible—just what the art world had coming to it, after the romantic excesses of Abstract Expressionism. What became known as Minimalism was one of the outgrowths of "Primary Structures," and though not herself a Minimalist, Hesse discovered her mature vocabulary by preempting some of Minimalism's formal devices—like repetition, for example. She was always on the lookout for titles she might use for sculptures.

"Chain Polymers" had just the right scientific ring to validate the work in her 1968 solo show as within the pale of primary structures. A chain polymer consists of a number of monomeric molecules chemically bonded together to form chain-like molecules. That suggests the kind of work she had assembled: iterated units loosely bonded. But only Hesse would have visualized this as a sequence of long, rigatoni-like fiberglass tubes leaned against a wall!

Viewers immediately recognized the importance of "Chain Polymers." It looked suitably Minimalist, and the title could not have been improved upon, given the spirit of the times. The works gave the impression of seriality, and the pieces seemed abstract enough. But Hesse's show was eccentric in a way that Minimalist doctrine could not countenance. It carried an air of mirth and jokiness, and an unmistakable whiff of eroticism. "Endless repetition can be considered erotic," she wrote in one of her diaries.

Yes, one wants to say, as long as it is not mechanical, which is eros's antithesis. Art in the age of mechanical repetition is like birdsong in the age of mechanical nightingales. One might say that nonmechanical repetition is one of Hesse's many contributions to the language of sculpture, and my overall sense is that this is in part what accounts for the aura of eroticism that animates her works. There is a teasing unpredictability about the strokes, if one may call them that, in *Accretion*, a work composed of fifty fiberglass tubes leaning toward or away from one another in groups that may aspire to numerical orderliness but hardly live up to it. One work, *Aught*, consists of four large rectangular latex pockets hung by grommets and stuffed with whatever Hesse had on hand. The title *Area* promises geometricity, but this work looks like an irregularly corrugated chaise longue.

"Hesse," according to the *Grove Dictionary of Art*, "was one of the first and most influential artists to question the austere, immobile exactitude of serial Minimalism." So she was, but the works are more than art criticism in action. She brought what Yeats called "sensual music" into an

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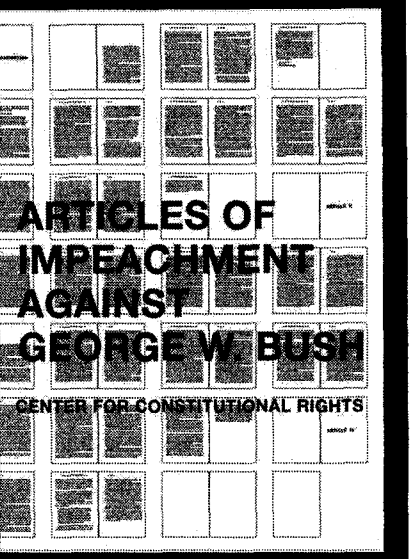

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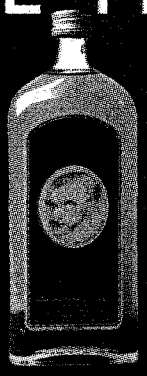

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art world that had been overtaken by what it thought were "monuments of unageing intellect." Hers is an art, to return to Carl Andre's dream of sculpture's future, "of fierce delicacy and passionate fragility." Fascinatingly, he compares Hesse's sculptures to Cézanne's late watercolors, with their pale, diaphanous planes. It is not the first comparison that would occur to anyone who enters the show, but the more one thinks about it, the more apt it becomes. "Chain Polymers" was a great exhibition in 1968 but it is even greater today, now that we have the forty-odd years of art history that have passed since then to appreciate the measure of her originality. ■

FILMS

Dazed and Confused

STUART KLAWANS

A SCANNER DARKLY • EXCELLENT CADAVERS

Let's say you could extract a gram of pure cocaine from a common aerosol product, using only a plastic bag and the freezer compartment of your refrigerator. Or imagine that with a few pennies' worth of Styrofoam, you could construct a silencer for the gun that every citizen today ought to carry.

In Philip K. Dick's novel *A Scanner Darkly*, the drug-addled Barris believes he can accomplish these home-handyman projects, so nifty and delusional—or perhaps he just pretends to believe. Maybe his megalomaniacal incompetence is a show, put on by the duplicitous Barris to distract other druggies from his real purposes, whatever they might be; or maybe he simply, pathetically hopes someone will take his boasts at face value, until the cocaine inevitably fails to crystallize and the gun goes boom.

Motives repeatedly get lost in the narcotic haze of *A Scanner Darkly*—both in the novel and in Richard Linklater's film adaptation, which comes into theaters ripe with the taste of your own well-masticated tongue. What's clear is that this adaptation would have been unthinkable without a nifty, semi-homemade technology of its own, which actually works: a system that turns live-action footage into metamorphic animation using computers much like the one on your desk.

Linklater first toyed with this technology in *Waking Life* (2001), in which he played with software developed and overseen by Bob Sabiston. You might say that *Waking Life* was the 1.0 *Slacker* release of a Linklater animation, since it offered instead of a plot a profusion of freely associated narratives, each segment of which blossomed forth in its own visual style. In *A Scanner Darkly*, Linklater has again relied on Sabiston's ingenious aerosol-and-Styrofoam technique, but this time he's applied it not just to a plot but to an obsessively intricate one, in which betrayals are piled upon suspicions heaped on double-dealings propped up by deceptions and brain malfunction, until the teetering structure resembles a model of the Brooklyn Bridge built out of burned matchsticks; and all of this is animated (under the supervision of Tommy Pallotta) in a single visual style that may be likened, appropriately enough, to camouflage.

The screen becomes a continually reassembled puzzle of flat, pulsing blobs of color—tans and browns, a saturated green like late-August leaves, pinks that sometimes suggest the onset of liver disease—here creeping around one another's borders, there floating one over another in thin layers. Figures shift and blur into the ground; the ground won't stay put. At its most extreme, this camouflage effect is localized in the "scramble suits" worn by the story's narcotics agents, who disguise themselves beneath an electronic fabric that swarms with fragmentary images of human features, rapidly and randomly projected. This isn't solely a matter of protecting the undercover cop's identity. In the '60s-era opposition of dopers versus straights—a binary scheme that Linklater preserves from Dick's novel—the narc ostensibly upholds social norms and so must have not one public face but many, conforming to the "vague blur" of consensus. Inside the scramble suit, though, dwells a watchful individual, hidden, isolated and disaffected. As the camera penetrates to this inner self, the animator's patches resolve into an image

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that's stable, more or less, and legible. It's Keanu Reeves.

In company with Winona Ryder, Woody Harrelson and Robert Downey Jr., who join him in lending the movie their well-known physiognomies, Keanu provides a touch of photographic realism—though too light a touch, I think, to feel reassuring. Much as Keanu's character lets slip his sense of identity—as you'd expect of a drug-addicted undercover narc assigned to carry out intensive surveillance on himself—so do you lose your grip on the actor's physical presence. He's here and gone, real and imaginary, in a way that exceeds the usual limits of cinema's waking dream. This animated dream attaches itself to the waking state like a crust, borrowing movement from the substrate of reality while coloring and changing and supplanting it.

There's something opportunistic about this process, in a good sense. I can imagine Linklater finishing *Waking Life* back in 2001 and wondering what he could do next with Sabiston's uncanny machine. I think of him rooting through his library and coming up with *A Scanner Darkly* as the perfect subject to feed into the hopper. But I also note the date of *Waking Life*—year zero of the global "war on terror"—and realize that Linklater found more in Dick's novel than a rich source of hallucination and paranoia, ideal for him to animate. Linklater must have been newly hungry for material about the national surveillance state, and *A Scanner Darkly* could feed that appetite, too.

From almost its first scene, Linklater's film plays up the political implications of Dick's cautionary tale of drug abuse. When Keanu, the scramble-suited narc, is called up before a civic boosters' club in Anaheim, California, to deliver a propaganda speech for his department, he listens miserably to the host describing him as one of "the troops fighting for us" against the "drug terrorists." This fight (like Bush's "war on terror") entails all-encompassing vigilance and perpetual suspicion; and so Linklater adds to the story a vast wiretapping center where agents seated at computer screens seem to be monitoring everyone's conversations at all times. (You glimpse the place when Keanu, now in street clothes, walks out of police headquarters and phones his heartthrob, Winona, to arrange a drug buy.) Later, in another scene that would have fit well in the novel but can be found only in the film, Linklater has Keanu and Winona encounter a protest speaker at a shopping mall. The man, shouting into his bullhorn, insists that powerful people in and around the government want the drug traffic to continue. It makes them money, he says; it gives them an excuse to exert control. At this point an unmarked van rolls up and a cop in riot gear steps out, to shock the protester into unconsciousness, toss him into the rear and silently drive away.

This isn't to say that Linklater reduces the war on drugs to a pure metaphor of the war on terror; but the realities of drug use clearly do not move him as much as they did Dick, whose novel is charged with anger at the drug traffic and a deep, intimate pity for its victims. Though set in 1994 and published in 1977, *A Scanner Darkly* is steeped in an insider's knowledge of 1960s drug culture, making it one of the most backward-looking of futuristic novels. The film retains some of this retro feel—even at the Bears Club Lodge in Anaheim, the squares are no longer *that* square—but for the most part Linklater brings you into the present, if not into the world of "seven years from now" that's announced in an introductory title. The price of this contemporaneity is the loss of precise turns of phrase, points of reference, social attitudes that bind the novel to its era but also tie it to a specific lived experience rather than to a generalized slackerdom.

But then, Linklater also thins out much of the novel's underbrush and many of its suffocating vines: the theological entanglements, for example, and looping strands of existentialist speculation. By cutting to the story's political core, Linklater has given *A Scanner Darkly* the coherence the book never had, and he has done so without diminishing Dick's scattershot brilliance—which is to say, his life.

I come to Robert Downey Jr. in the role of the inventive Barris. Here Downey is in semi-cartoon form, his gestures balletically extended, his eyes popped as an aid to the animators, his smooth baritone poured onto the soundtrack with an extra dollop of malicious glee. Given the movie's showiest role—demented clowns are always more expressive than gloomy, self-controlled narcs—Downey manages to be as absurd, compelling, convincing and irresistible as you've ever seen him, despite the challenge of being morphed into computerized paint. But Woody Harrelson is just as good, throwing around his long body and stoner's wit with blithe self-abandon; and so is Winona Ryder, who drifts dreamily in and out of her scenes swallowing her r's as if they were an especially succulent brand of Southern California candy.

Keanu remains Keanu. The bouncy dude with limited range has long since become a man with something pained and doubtful

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NATIONAL

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in his manner. Linklater has recognized and respected this sense of constraint and also an enduring underlying sweetness that can be allowed to emerge later in the character. I had wearied of Keanu, as would anyone, I think, who'd sat through both *The Matrix Revolutions* and *Constantine*. Thanks to *A Scanner Darkly*, I'm able to like him again.

He's one of the people who bring life to this heady, improbable project, which you wouldn't have thought could crystallize but somehow did. *A Scanner Darkly* is funny, unnerving, astonishing, urgent. It's my kind of summertime special-effects extravaganza.

Because Alexander Stille is a first-rate journalist, I wouldn't want him to give up his day job—a possibility that fortunately seems remote, judging from his performance in the documentary *Excellent Cadavers*. As author of the book on which the film is based—an account of the efforts of a few courageous magistrates to break the Mafia's power in Sicily—he serves director Marco Turco as an on-screen tour guide, gamely strolling into this archive or that library to pull volumes off the shelf and be photographed examining them. You watch with sympathy as Stille waits for the shot to end, so he can quit this pretense of research. After the eighth or ninth such sequence, you wish Turco would cut you loose, too.

Directorial awkwardness is always easy to deride. (Have I mentioned the fascinating shots of Stille pretending to type?) But in *Excellent Cadavers*, the importance of the subject matter and the impeccability of the reportage triumph over stylistic shortcomings.

Turco and Stille frame the story with the murders in 1992 of Giovanni Falcone and Paolo Borsellino, magistrates who had spent years investigating the Mafia in Palermo at great cost to themselves and their families. These men had put many of the most important bosses in jail for life. They even had begun to expose the continuing connection between the Mafia and Italy's political elite—an act that would prove fatal. The archival footage that Turco has amassed of the magistrates is stunning, especially whenever Falcone reveals the true face of heroism. He was an unassuming man, quiet and self-deprecating.

Excellent Cadavers takes an honorable place in a line that stretches from Margarethe von Trotta's *Il Lungo Silenzio* and Ricky Tognazzi's *La Scorta* to Francesco Rosi's early masterpiece, *Salvatore Giuliano*. You can catch the US premiere at New York's Film Forum starting July 12. ■

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PUZZLE NO. 3043

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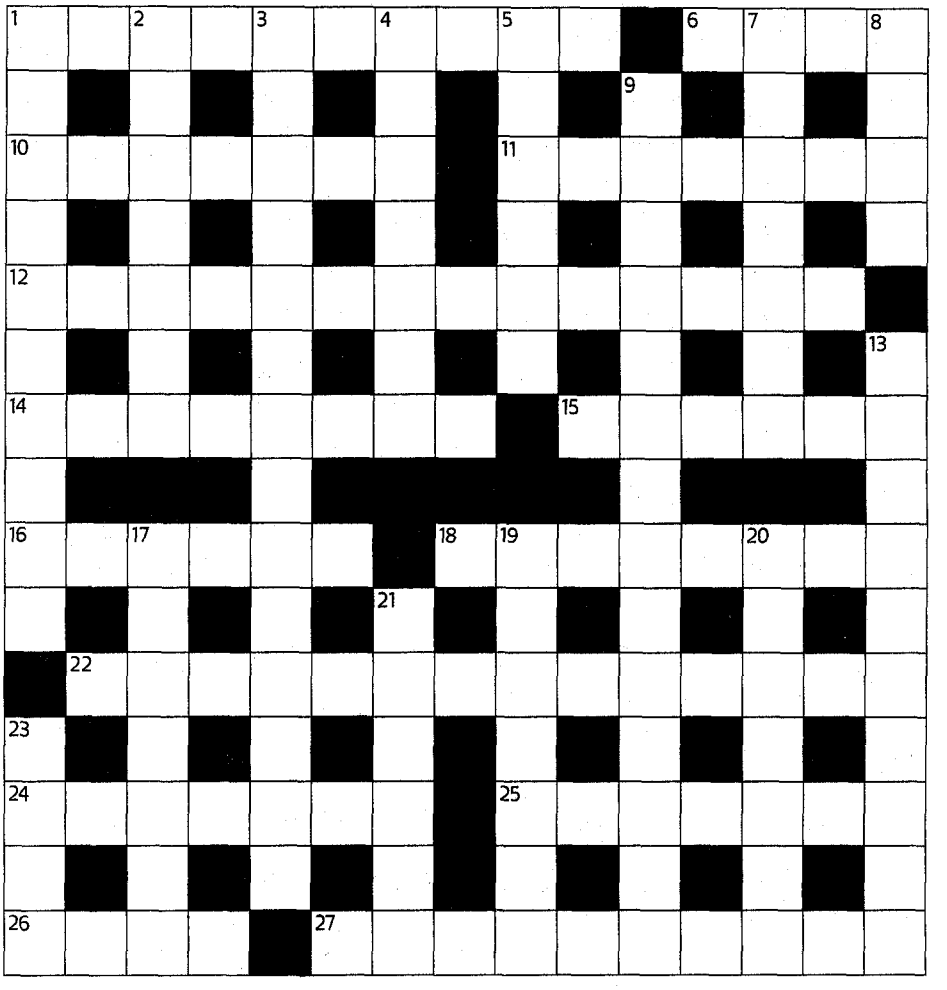

ACROSS

1 Stone asked all around to find out where one should be when the bell rings. (2,4,4)

6 Give some questionable assistance to what is laid down on the gambling table. (4)

10 One or two for example get back in a sort of rein. (7)

11 Zoroastrian language makes an "oompah" lavishly, to show it. (7)

12 Sounds as though someone administered doses of salts, but it proves something to study. (7,7)

14 I have to tell you twice to shut up about a secret this big. (8)

15 Where the tog is rough, as well as the togs. (6)

16 Look, a path—yet it won't matter to you if you're overwhelmed by this. (6)

18 It seems to be only a passable imitation, but it's made after final correction. (4,4)

22 Alter some in ND, and one forms a different opinion if one does. (6,4,4)

24 Exists with a real switch, and I finish it for people. (7)

25 What some call the cart, especially if it belongs to Charles, when he gets in a mark, properly. (3,4)

26 From the far tip of Aruba to the entry to Thebes, a nice long one could be very relaxing. (4)

27 No talking in the theater! (6,4)

DOWN

1 Hate Manila deliriously, it'll help keep you warm. (10)

2 A short month to work for an undersea creature. (7)

3 What TV viewers turn to, if they only understand our language, but many travelers cross it. (7,7)

4 A murder I describe shows what the scorner does. (7)

5 The dumb guy has an unusual hop, according to the old poet. (6)

7 Two animals, or one? (Furnished transportation quite a while ago.) (7)

8 The part that went over the fence last, which sounds like quite a story. (4)

9 Find what should be luminous in a funny shop where you find a sign for quiet, and a wild horse to put money on. (14)

13 Silver-white element, placed in the only bed made up that has "quiet" surroundings. (10)

17 Make an arrangement with Ms. Heart to find Dickinson's home. (7)

19 "Little Annie" obviously—showing how to put up money around the World Wide Web. (7)

20 Originally started with a Parisian friend of Japanese art. (7)

21 What they call for when someone is wounded in battle, with one being in a well-known family. (6)

23 You might get caught short when out on one, giving "an arm or a leg" for it. (4)

SOLUTION TO PUZZLE NO. 3042

V	A	L	E	T	U	D	I	N	A	R	I	A	N	
O		E		U		O		E		A		L		E
L	E	V	E	R	E	D		W	A	N	G	L	E	D
U		E		N		O		E		G		O		E
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	U	P	O	N	R	E	F	L	E	C	T	I	O	N

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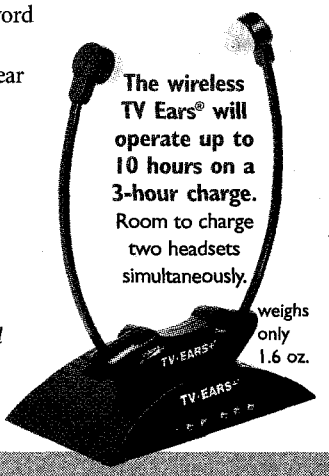

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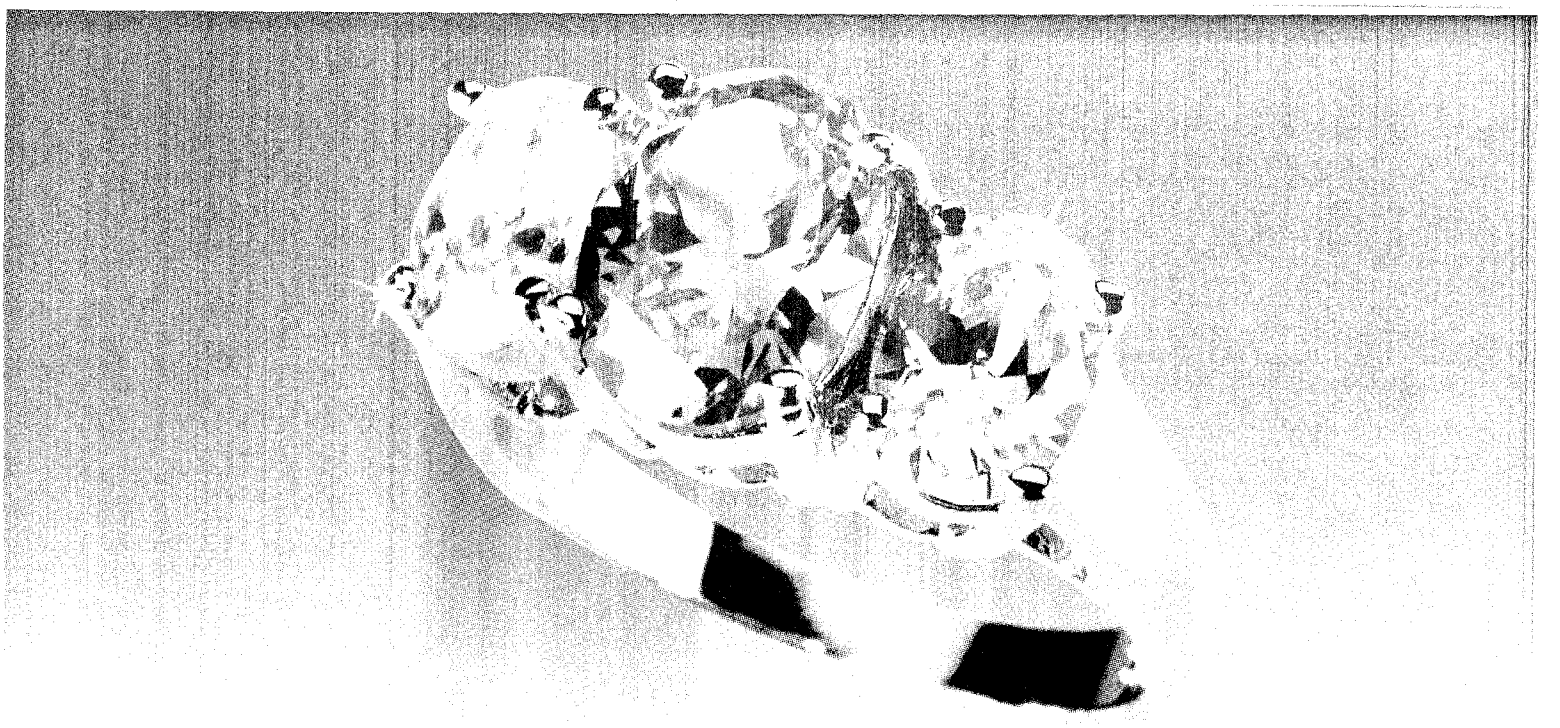

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As a member of the community of jewelers, I have the opportunity to frequently visit Antwerp, Belgium, the Diamond Capitol of the World. All of the most renowned jewelers buy their best diamonds here. My 5th generation Belgium gem broker is at the top of his trade and enjoys finding a special gem with a certain size, shape, color and clarity—he doesn't trade in what is available on the local market. Recently he was excited to discover a hoard of the most sought-after diamonds today: Canary and Fancy Yellow diamonds. Many people find yellow diamonds more desirable than any other color due to their inherently warm optic color.

During our visit he proudly displayed a brilliant round-cut Canary diamond, explaining that natural yellow color diamonds are 10,000 times more rare than their brilliant white, colorless counterparts. Turning the stone in the light, he said the intensity of color is of paramount importance, and clarity increases the inherent value of a high-quality color diamond. He said this fine Canary Yellow gemstone, framed by two white diamonds, retails for at least $10,000. As my broker admired this treasure, I decided now was the time for a little amusement.

Our Natural Mined Canary Ring

Canary Yellow Round-Cut Diamond (.67 carats):
Natural yellow color
Clarity rating: VS
Two Companion White Round-Cut Diamonds (.49 total carats):
Color rating: G-H
Clarity rating: Si1
Setting: Platinum and 18K gold

As he glanced away, I placed a similar lab-created Diamond*Aura* yellow stone next to the natural mined diamond. My broker thought he was seeing double. I asked him to choose the mined diamond, but he said he could only guess. After close examination he was astonished—the flawless, lab-created stone was so visually similar in almost every way! He started to wonder about the future of the diamond business.

We were inspired by it's radiant color. Influenced by the ultra-rare Canary diamond, we went to the gemological laboratory to craft this extraordinary jewelry using lab-created gemstones that are practically indistinguishable from mined diamonds. Our stones are heated to over 5000 degrees in very expensive state-of-the-art lab equipment to create Diamond*Aura*. Our Diamond*Aura* Canary Ring has a look that's sure to turn heads! The ring features an oval-cut canary Diamond*Aura* stone set in the center with two oval-cut white Diamond*Aura* stones on either side, for a total carat weight of over 5.5 carats. The center canary stone will tantalize the eyes with its radiating color as the two white Diamond*Aura* stones that surround it glint and sparkle upon your hand. The band is platinum-plated .925 sterling silver that won't tarnish over time. Truly affordable elegance!

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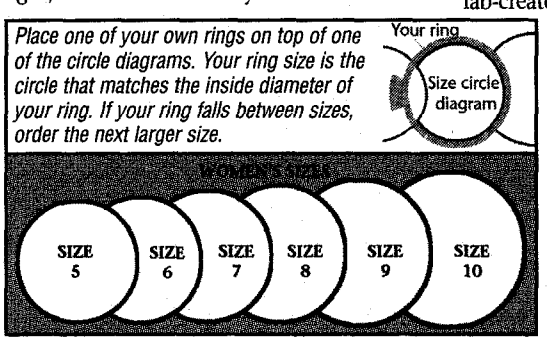
Place one of your own rings on top of one of the circle diagrams. Your ring size is the circle that matches the inside diameter of your ring. If your ring falls between sizes, order the next larger size.



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